



# Home & Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

## Bosnia aid fund troubles Turkey's Islamic party

**ANKARA (AP)** — The plight of Bosnian Muslims was embraced by Turkey's Islamic fundamentalists as an issue well-suited to their anti-Western rhetoric. But it has produced a scandal for their party. The Welfare Party is under investigation for allegedly keeping about \$39 million it raised from Turks to help Bosnia. And it is having a hard time providing an explanation.

"Poor or rich, every Turk would have donated money for the Bosnian Muslims, and the welfare used that to its advantage," said Gencay Saylan, an academic who studies radical Islamic movements.

The issue has eroded the party's image less than a year after its stunning local election victories that included winning mayoral posts in the capital of Ankara and in Istanbul, Turkey's biggest city.

Questions about the money first arose last May, and events continue to tar the party.

In December, a group of Welfare deputies attacked an opposition legislator with punches and kicks during a parliament session when he tried to raise the issue. The brawl was broadcast live on television.

A second incident, the party introduced a Bosnian Muslim, clad in a military uniform, as a colonel who acknowledged receiving the party's aid money. Reporters soon discovered the person was a Muslim priest in Bosnia.

"The media is just trying to create confusion. He also fights in the war," Oguzhan Asilturk, the Welfare Party's secretary-general, said in a statement.

Critics have not let up.

"They are in panic, because they are guilty," said Hikmet Cetinkaya, a columnist for the moderate-leftist national newspaper Cumhuriyet (Republican).

Turkish news reports have detailed allegations of a money trail that bypassed Bosnia.

The aid money — raised at

large rallies around the country — was reportedly first sent to a relief group set up by Welfare in Germany. It was then transferred to a party member named Suleyman Mercunek in Istanbul. Welfare allegedly used the money for its election campaign last March.

When the reports first surfaced last May, high-level party officials said they knew no one named Suleyman Mercunek. Shortly afterwards, they admitted that Mercunek was the party's bookkeeper.

A parliamentary committee is now looking into the allegations. Welfare has suspended fundraising for the Bosnian Muslims.

Mr. Asilturk has said Welfare did not use the Red Cross or U.N. channels to send money to Bosnia because they would share the donations with Bosnian Serbs and Croats.

The Welfare Party rose to prominence by campaigning with promises to tackle such financial troubles as the high inflation that has eroded buying power and worsened poverty.

Welfare also benefited from corruption scandals tainting the mainstream secular parties. The aid scandal has undercut Welfare's portrayal as a clean alternative, but some experts think the issue will not severely damage its reputation among hard-core followers — rural villagers and the urban poor.

"It is not possible to link their election success with the Bosnian money. The domestic problems served to their advantage," Mr. Saylan said.

The Welfare Party also has created a network of charities and businesses and established social and health services in slum areas.

"Our popularity will remain high as long as the country's problems persist."

"Welfare would be better off without the Bosnia scandal. But they have a strong propaganda network throughout the country with almost all the 70,000 mosques preaching their cause," he said.

The Welfare Party has made progress in Muslim countries, made it their duty to celebrate iftar with a sumptuous



PRINCE ABDULLAH HOSTSIFTAR: His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, president of the Jordan Football Association, Tuesday hosted an iftar at the Hussein Youth Club in honour of Widhat, Faisal and Hussein Iribid

soccer teams. The iftar was attended by Minister of Youth Awad Khleifat, Greater Amman Mayor Maamoud Al Ahbabi, heads of the three clubs, and sports figures (Petra photo)

## Embargo-hit Iraqis have meagre Ramadan fare

**BAGHDAD (AFP)** — While Muslims elsewhere feast after sundown at the traditional iftar meal during the Holy Month of Ramadan, most Iraqis are reduced to a meager diet of vegetable soup, a few dates and, for the lucky ones, a cup of tea.

"To be honest, we have been fasting for more than four years due to the embargo imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait," said Mabrus Mohammad, 45, a civil servant with 20 years' service behind him.

This time the fast is even harder to keep because of the greed of our merchants," added Mohammad, who has to feed five in his family.

"Our iftar meal consists of soup without meat, a few zanzibas (the cheapest Iraqi dates) and a cup of tea if we happen to have any sugar."

Before the embargo one dinar was worth 3.2 dollars. Iraqi newspapers have condemned the price rises without effect, attacking merchants as "gangs of parasites who are profiting at the expense of the people."

In October the government almost halved the monthly rations of four basic food-stuffs — flour, rice, sugar and oil.

The prices of virtually all foodstuffs have skyrocketed since the beginning of Ramadan a week ago.

A kilogramme of beef costs between 1,000 and 1,250 dinars, while chicken costs between 970 and 1,000.

The prices of sugar, rice and flour have risen by up to 30 per cent, as have those of fruit and vegetables.

In a bid to combat speculation, the ruling Baath party has set up big markets in

feast lasting until sunset, the last meal before sunrise.

Umm Ali, a housewife, said her family had given up eating fast.

"What we eat is not even the minimum necessary," she complained.

An Iraqi doctor said the iftar food consumed by most Iraqis "does not provide sufficient calories for the fast," which lasts from sunrise to sundown.

In October the government urged the authorities to adopt "measures to dissuade those who are waging an economic war against the people."

Latif Abu Ali, another civil servant, said meat was "a rare commodity, increasingly priced beyond our means."

He said his iftar meal consisted only of "a plate of rice, a few potatoes and dates."

Mosques, which previously served as refuges for the needy, no longer provide a free iftar service, despite a growing demand.

In a bid to combat speculation, the ruling Baath party has set up big markets in

any of civil servants ranges from 3,000 to 5,000 dinars — \$4.2 to \$7.7, according to the exchange rate on the parallel market.

Before the embargo one dinar was worth 3.2 dollars.

Iraqi newspapers have condemned the price rises without effect, attacking merchants as "gangs of parasites who are profiting at the expense of the people."

The authorities have reported cases of rickets and stunted growth among children because of severe milk shortages.

A Trade Ministry spokesman said Iraq imported 300 million dollars' worth of milk annually for children before U.N. sanctions were imposed, and the country now lacked 40 per cent of its needs.

The U.N. embargo does not ban food and medicine but Iraq says it cannot afford to import enough for its needs as it is deprived of revenue from oil exports, which made up more than 90 per cent of its total income before 1990.

Baghdad where food is sold at reasonable prices.

Meanwhile, Iraqi housewives are becoming more resourceful in their battle against hardship. Many use beetroot instead of tomatoes for the traditional Ramadan soup, date syrup instead of sugar and bake their own bread.

The authorities have reported cases of rickets and stunted growth among children because of severe milk shortages.

A Trade Ministry spokesman said Iraq imported 300 million dollars' worth of milk annually for children before U.N. sanctions were imposed, and the country now lacked 40 per cent of its needs.

The U.N. embargo does not ban food and medicine but Iraq says it cannot afford to import enough for its needs as it is deprived of revenue from oil exports, which made up more than 90 per cent of its total income before 1990.

Mosques, which previously served as refuges for the needy, no longer provide a free iftar service, despite a growing demand.

In a bid to combat speculation, the ruling Baath party has set up big markets in

## Israelis, Palestinians on collision course over Holy City

By Karin Lauh

The Associated Press

**OCCUPIED JERUSALEM** — When Ibrahim Abu Teir looks from his window at the green, terraced hillside farmed by his family for generations, he feels anger, not pride.

Soon bulldozers will plough the land to build Har Homa, an Israeli-only neighbourhood of 6,500 apartments in the Palestinian part of Jerusalem, site of their future capital.

"Peace is an empty word. This means a continuation of war with the Jews," said Mr. Abu Teir, 65, a graying-faced Palestinian farmer.

Har Homa is part of Israel's large-scale building programme under which more than 65,000 apartments have been built or approved for construction on land seized from the Arabs in the 1967 Mideast war.

Palestinians see the building as an attempt by Israel to cement claims to all of Jerusalem before negotiations on the city's final status begin next year.

Faisal Husseini, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Jerusalem, last week

warned of a "new uprising" if Israel did not stop the construction and show a readiness for compromise.

But even liberal Israelis are hawks on Jerusalem.

The struggle for Jerusalem has to be foremost in our minds," Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin, a key negotiator of the Israel-PLO autonomy accord, said recently. "We need to continue building massively inside Jerusalem, even in the face of the whole world which doesn't like this."

Most foreign governments do not recognise Israel's "annexation" of Arab East Jerusalem.

Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh said the Israelis are deluding themselves if they think they can keep Jerusalem and still make peace.

"If we can't divide things up between us, we are going to end up having the two peoples at each other's throats," Dr. Nusseibeh said.

The heart of the dispute is East Jerusalem, which Israel seized in 1967.

Among the war spoils were sacred shrines of Judaism, Islam and Christianity in the walled Old City. Jews pray at the western wall.

Palestinians see the building as an attempt by Israel to cement claims to all of Jerusalem before negotiations on the city's final status begin next year.

Faisal Husseini, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official in Jerusalem, last week

which Jews believe is the last remnant of an ancient Jewish temple. The Al Aqsa Mosque complex is revered by Muslims as the site of the Prophet Muhammad's ascension. Christians pray at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where tradition says Jesus was buried.

Today, the city has 405,000 Jewish and 155,000 Arab residents. The Israelis have built so heavily in the eastern sector that Jews now outnumber Arabs there, by 160,000 to 155,000.

A ring of Jewish suburbs cuts off East Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland. Since 1967, some 65,700 apartments have been built or are planned in the suburbs, said Sarah Kaminker, a former city council member.

For the Palestinians, East Jerusalem is the religious, economic and political hub. They want to establish their future capital, Al Quds, there.

Since taking control of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has repeatedly promised the Palestinians that one day their flag would fly over the Old City.

But many Israelis refer to Jerusalem as the heart and soul of the Jewish people.

In his speeches, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sometimes refers to his experiences as a 26-year-old brigade commander when he fought to keep open the main road to the city during the 1948 war.

Mr. Rabin has approved more than 3,000 new homes in three such settlements that already have some 40,000 residents.

Israel apparently is gambling that Mr. Arafat, who has staked his political future on peace with Israel,

will not pull out of the negotiations because of Jerusalem.

Israeli officials argue that while Mr. Rabin pledged to curb construction in most West Bank settlements, East Jerusalem was not part of the deal.

Bur Palestinians say Israel promised not to change the status quo in Jerusalem until talks on the city's future begin, likely next year.

The Palestinians have also begun to put some markers on the map. The campaign is led by Mr. Husseini, minister for Jerusalem affairs in Mr. Arafat's government.

At Orient House, the PLO's de facto foreign ministry in East Jerusalem, Mr. Husseini frequently receives foreign dignitaries. Israel complains the visits violate the autonomy accord and has at times set up police barriers to monitor comings and goings.

Mr. Husseini has also reportedly won a pledge of \$30 million from Saudi Arabia to help the PLO build a government infrastructure in Jerusalem and to build some housing.

Mr. Abu Teir is now left with half an acre to graze 200 sheep. He said he and his 13 children felt cornered: "The Jews are swallowing us. They say we want coexistence and peace. But where should I live if they take my land?"

Homa site. The neighbourhood on the southeastern edge of the city will lie between the West Bank town of Beit Sabour and the village of Umm Tuba in the city limits.

Ms. Kaminker said two-thirds of the land was expropriated from Jews who bought it from Arabs after 1967, and one-third was taken from Palestinians. She said Palestinians will not be able to buy apartments in Har Homa.

Mr. Abu Teir, the village elder of Umm Tuba, said he lost seven acres on which he and his six brothers grow olive, almond and pine trees.

Showing a handwritten land deed in Arabic dating back to Ottoman times, Mr. Abu Teir said he refused money for the land. He did not say why, but in the past Arabs selling land to Jews have been targeted by Palestinian activists as collaborators.

Mr. Abu Teir is now left with half an acre to graze 200 sheep. He said he and his 13 children felt cornered: "The Jews are swallowing us. They say we want coexistence and peace. But where should I live if they take my land?"

Dozens arrested in Iranian corruption

TEHRAN (AFP) — Authorities in northwestern Iran have launched a campaign against financial corruption, arresting dozens of people, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

The daily Iran, quoting an intelligence official in West Azerbaijan, said several transport ministry employees had been arrested in the province for accepting 500 million rials (around \$190,000) of bribes. Several directors of a state housing cooperative had also been arrested for receiving 240 million rials (\$90,000) in bribes, he said.

The official added that a customs official in the province and 10 others had "confessed" to forging documents worth 1.2 billion rials (\$500,000). The vice-president of a real-estate registrar office and four others had been arrested in the provincial city of Orumieh for embezzling 200 million rials (\$75,000), he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 3 Kuwaiti women return from Iraq

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The International Committee of the Red Cross has repatriated three Kuwaiti women who have been living in Iraq since 1990, an ICRC official said Tuesday. ICRC Deputy regional Delegate Jean-Claude Risso said the women crossed the border between Iraq and Kuwait late Monday under Red Cross auspices. "These women are not among the list of the prisoners of war ... they went to Iraq freely and had expressed their desire to join their relatives in Kuwait," the official added. He refused to name the women, saying that they were aged 15, 28 and 29. "We contacted both the Kuwaiti and Iraqi authorities to inform them... and both accepted," he added. Around 5,900 Kuwaitis, who were not regarded as prisoners of war, have returned from Iraq since the end of the occupation in 1991.

### Musa heads for Japan to prepare Mubarak visit

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Musa left for Japan on Tuesday to prepare a visit by President Hosni Mubarak in March and discuss plans to boost cooperation. Mr. Musa, who was to travel to the United States, Germany, France and Italy, said his talks would cover economic, scientific and technological cooperation as well as investments and tourism. Japan's exports to Egypt in 1993 were worth \$743 million, compared to \$101 million in Egyptian imports. In Washington, Mr. Musa is to take part in an Arab-Israeli foreign ministers meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher whose country is the chief sponsor of the peace process.

### Israel denies residency for Safieh

LONDON (AFP) — Israel has refused to issue a residence permit to a London-based Palestinian diplomat who wanted to return to Jerusalem, his birthplace. Palestinian sources said Monday. According to a statement from the Palestinian delegation in London, Amal Safieh, his head, has been told by the Israeli interior ministry that a request he had submitted under the procedure for reuniting families has been turned down. Mr. Safieh was studying abroad when Israel occupied Jerusalem in 1967. Now married to a Belgian wife and father of two daughters he could only return to the place of his birth after the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Oslo in September 1993. Since then he has been back four times but only as a Belgian tourist for a short duration" in the words of the statement.

### Isreali police question minister in fraud probe

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Police have questioned Israeli Energy Minister Gonen Segev over allegations that he was paid for fraudulent medical certificates, the authorities said Tuesday. Dr. Segev, a physician, is suspected of providing the documents to enable Holocaust survivors

**IN BRIEF****Steel company expected to produce in October**

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

local demand. Jordan's imports of iron and steel were about \$200 million in 1994. The precise component in this of iron fittings for construction was not immediately known.

According to the company officials, the Jordan Steel Company would also focus on export markets in neighbouring countries, including Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

The company has a paid-up capital of JD 16 million held by 16,000 shareholders. The company officials said no single shareholder owned more than 10 per cent of the equity.

Market analysts noted that the emergence of the company, which was set up in March 1993, comes at a time when the scope for the construction industry in Jordan as well as the Palestinian territories had increased considerably following the breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

Plans drawn up by the Jordanian government and expected to be implemented in the course of next few years include a large construction project.

It is also estimated that the West Bank and Gaza Strip would absorb several billion dollars in construction in the next decades or so.



**AID FOR EDUCATION:** The European Union (EU) and the Jordanian government Tuesday signed an agreement and to cover the cost of related consultancy services. Mr. Gazzo said that the million European currency units (ECUs) project will be undertaken by the educational project for the development of education facilities in Jordanian universities. Yves addition to the National Centre for Education and Research over who signed the accord with Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf Huneidi, said that the grant was part of a 5.5 million ECUs assigned by the EU to the project aims at improving the training courses for teachers employed at the Jordanian government to help it carry out compulsory school levels with a view to development schemes.

**RSCN to attend conference on endangered animal species**

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)

pants on the measures undertaken by the RSCN to settle the Arabian oryx and other species in their natural habitat, according to the statement.

It said that the conference was expected to tackle ways to help concerned nations to increase the numbers of animals from endangered species and to review a number of cases where certain species became extinct as a result of neglect and lack of proper attention, transportation of animals from one country to another and lack of precautionary measures taken upon releasing the animals in their natural habitat in order to protect their lives.

The RSCN currently operates five wildlife reserves: Azraq Wetland Reserve, Shauamri Wildlife Reserve, which was established 1975 and has 150 heads of Arabian Oryx, Wadi Mujah Reserve,

Zuhya Reserve, where fallow deer were reintroduced and Dana Wildlife Reserve, near Tafileh.

Meanwhile, an RSCN official said Tuesday that the society was currently benefiting from a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) grant which is financing a survey on Burq' area to study prospects for creating an additional reserve.

Burq', which lies close to the borders with Syria, houses an ancient Roman castle and water springs and pools.

The survey is to determine the suitability of the area to be declared as the first "biopshere reserve" in Jordan.

A team consisting of researchers from RSCN, the University of Jordan and the Environment Department is at work on the survey in the Burq' area.

**Money allocated for northern badia hospital**

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Mafraq Governor Qasim Majali said in a statement Tuesday that the Health Ministry has allocated JD 200,000 for the initial stage of a hospital to be constructed in the northern Badia district this year.

The health Ministry is still to locate the site for the hospital which will benefit the area's 90,000 inhabitants, according to Mr. Majali.

The northern Badia district accounts for 80 per cent of the total area of the Mafraq Governorate and its population accounts for 55 per cent of the governorate's inhabitants, according to the governor.

In addition to the projected hospital, he said, the Health Ministry will this year set up a comprehensive health centre at Rweished and another at Mansoura to the total cost of JD 250,000 and primary health centres at Sarhan, Baqiy, Umm Al Sirh and Al Kum, at the cost of

JD 70,000 for the benefit of the northern Badia residents.

According to Mr. Majali, the northern Badia districts are attracting the attention of the private and public sectors, as most of the agricultural projects and most of the industries are located there.

He said that the Badia areas of the Mafraq Governorate benefit from road networks, electricity and water supplies as well as community centres, schools, post offices, civil defence and other basic services.

Mr. Majali said that the government has allocated JD 550,000 to finance construction or maintenance of schools and roads, JD 300,000 to finance projects in the Hamad basin area, which is undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and JD 1.6 million to improve the water networks in the Badia districts. These, he said, are all to be carried out during 1995.

**Japan donates computers to school**

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has decided to donate computer equipment for the Prince Hamzeh ibn Al Hussein School, worth JD 44,438, within the framework of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GAPP).

The grant contract to this effect was signed between Yuji Ikeda, ambassador of Japan, and Jihan Shugum, deputy chairperson of the Administrative Committee of the Circassian Charity Society/Women Branch, on Feb. 7, 1995.

The equipment, consisting of 15 units of computer system, is expected to make advanced computer education available, in accordance with the new curriculum set by the Ministry of Education.

This donation is also regarded as a contribution to the

**House committee briefed on Jordan-PNA agreements, Cairo Arab-Israeli talks**

AMMAN (Petra) — The Foreign Affairs Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Tuesday listened to reports by Cabinet members regarding the agreements signed between Jordan and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) on Jan. 26 in Amman.

Speaking after the meeting, committee chairman, Dr. Abdulla Ensor, said that Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh briefed the committee members on the general agreement between the two sides.

Mr. Rawabdeh noted that

stressing that the Jordanian nationality will not be subject of any discussion, while the Palestinian nationality is the right of those living on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The minister said that the foreign ministers of Palestine, Jordan and Egypt recently held a coordination meeting in Egypt in order to prepare for their coming meeting with the Israeli foreign minister later this month and the coming meeting which will group the foreign ministers of the four countries as well as the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Kabarini also spoke about his visits to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, which he described as opening a new chapter in inter-Arab relations.

Mr. Kabarini said that he plans to make other trips to the remaining members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, but gave no date for the trips.

The meeting did not take

place in order to forge an alliance or an axis, something which Jordan adamantly rejects, said Mr. Kabarini.

The minister said that the foreign ministers of Palestine, Jordan and Egypt recently held a coordination meeting in Egypt in order to prepare for their coming meeting with the Israeli foreign minister later this month and the coming meeting which will group the foreign ministers of the four countries as well as the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Kabarini also spoke about his visits to Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, which he described as opening a new chapter in inter-Arab relations.

Mr. Kabarini said that he plans to make other trips to the remaining members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, but gave no date for the trips.

**Campaign aims to counter iodine deficiency disorders**By Amy Henderson  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Health in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) this month are launching an effort to eliminate high occurrences of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in Jordanian children by adding iodine to packaged table salt.

The effort to iodise table salt follows a 1993 study of goitre prevalence in Jordan which showed an unusually high occurrence of goitre children 8 to 10 years of age.

The study of 337,000 children, conducted by UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health, showed that among children in this age group nearly 38 per cent have goitre.

"Although we do not consider this a chronic health problem, we do consider it a severe health problem," said Dr. Osama Badran, chairman of the IDD research team currently serving as the director of mother and child health care centre in Amman. Normal prevalence of goitre in any society should be less than ten per cent, he told the Jordan Times.

Goitre prevalence in the Amman, Irbid, Balqa, Ma'an and Tafileh governorates is considered severe; in Karak moderate; and in Zarqa and Mafraq, mild, said Dr. Badran, adding that there is no explanation why some districts have more severe cases than others.

The term goitre literally means an enlarged thyroid gland resulting from lack of a thyroid hormone — the main sign that the body is trying to compensate for lack of iodine. When a low

level of thyroid hormone is detected by a gland in the brain, the gland stimulates the thyroid gland with its own thyroid stimulation hormone (TSH), forcing the thyroid to work harder (thus enlarging it) to produce more thyroid hormone — much the same way the heart becomes enlarged when it is overworked.

Other IDDs, other than the enlargement of the thyroid gland, include cretinism, mental deficiency, hearing loss and other neurological impairments.

Generally, fish and sea food are rich sources of iodine. But it is also found in vegetables grown in soils containing adequate amounts of the element or in dairy, poultry and meat products. In cases where animals' diets have included sufficient iodine, which is not the case in Jordan, Dr. Badran said.

There are a number of ways to introduce iodine to the daily diet of population, according to Dr. Badran. For example, in Syria and Iran, iodine is included in bread; iodine is added to water in the Philippines; and in Germany, it is added to most food products.

"Adding (iodine) to bread would be ideal, since not everyone consumes table salt," Dr. Badran said. "But for now, we will be iodising table salt," he said, adding that hopefully, iodine would also be added to bread in the near future.

UNICEF and WHO recommended levels of iodine in salt range from 22.5-50 milligrams per kilogramme. However, according to a University of Science and Technology study, of 11 salt brands marketed in Jordan, only three fell within the target range. The most popular

**Southern roads blocked by snow**

MAAN (Petra) — The snow

that fell in the Maan Governorate Monday blocked the Shobak-Wadi Mousa road, but workers were Tuesday exerting strenuous efforts to reopen them, according to Maan Governor Hussein Hashashneh.

The governor said that the roads were covered by a 20-centimetre blanket of snow, which prompted the local authorities to declare the two roads closed.

Nayef Nawayseh, director

of the Public Works Department in Maan, said that his office's operations room had been in contact with all concerned authorities and municipalities to enliven cooperation in clearing the roads.

He said his department's road clearing equipment was being used along with that of the nearby municipalities to re-open the two roads.

The governor announced that the road blockage was temporary, adding that there were no reported accidents as a result of the snow.

He said that the Ras Na-

qab, Ale, Taybeh, Basta, Wadi Mousa, Shobak and Bir Bitar areas received heavy snowfalls over night, and warned motorists to take extra precaution in driving.

Meanwhile, the Department of Meteorology Tuesday forecast more scattered showers and snow in Jordan as a result of the low depression over northern Syria.

It said that the effects of the depression will diminish Wednesday, but there will still be chances for scattered showers.

**NEWS IN BRIEF****Qaqish presents credentials in Baghdad**

BAGHDAD (J.T.) — Jordan's newly appointed Ambassador to Iraq Bassam Qaqish Tuesday presented his credentials to Izzat Ibrahim, deputy chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council. Mr. Qaqish succeeds Nasrou Al Majali to the post.

**New lawyers sworn in**

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 28 Jordanian lawyers were sworn in before Justice Minister Hisham Tel and in the presence of the Bar Association President Kamal Nasser. The new lawyers have just completed their two-year training at lawyers' offices.

**Council to study Constitution**

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies in Jordan said Tuesday that it was preparing a

study of the Jordanian Constitution with the purpose of drawing the concerned authorities' attention to certain violations. A council official said that while the Constitution explicitly provides for equal treatment for all citizens, the country has special courts for trying high officials. The official said that the study, which is due to be published within a month's time, will contain other examples of violations and a clear interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution regarding them.

**NAF assists 1,219 families**

NORTH SHUENEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) in the northern Jordan Valley district last year provided financial assistance totalling JD 34,112 to 1,219 needy families. Ali Qussem, director of social development here, said that the assistance reached the needy in monthly payments. He said that this year NAF will execute four vocational training projects in the district to enable family heads to earn a living.

**WHAT'S GOING ON**

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

**FILM**

★ Film entitled "Jude and Obscure" at the British Council at 7:00 p.m.

★ Film entitled "Charlotte Forten's Mission: Experiment in Freedom" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m.

**PLAY**

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "Ye Who Are Hearing" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

**SEMINAR**

★ Seminar (in Arabic) entitled "Peace and Future Horizons" by Mr. Yousef Abu Bakr and Mr. Husni Al

Shuyab at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

**EXHIBITIONS**

★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Center.

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing another exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy.

★ Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Baba at Darat Al Funun. Also showing another exhibition entitled "Phase II-Doors and Windows" by Jordanian artist Ghada Dahdaleh and works by contemporary Arab artists.

★ Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of works by Hala Mahayni at the Petra International Hotel in Aqaba.

## Peru, Ecuador diplomats head for Brasilia; fighting continues

LIMA (AP) — Peru and Ecuador have told their deputy foreign ministers to stay in Brazil, signaling the possibility of new talks to end a war over a swatch of dense jungle.

But there was no letup in the fighting Monday, and neither side gave any indication it was ready to relinquish its claim to disputed territory along an unmarked 48-mile section of border near the headwaters of the Cenepa River.

Peru ordered its deputy foreign minister to Brasilia, Brazil's capital, Monday after Ecuador said it was ready to resume peace talks. Ecuador's deputy foreign minister has remained in Brazil after accompanying President Sixto Duran-Ballen there as part of a three-nation tour to plead his country's case.

### 18 killed, 7 hurt in S. Korean ship fire

SEOUL (R) — Eighteen people were killed and seven seriously injured in a fire aboard a container vessel being repaired in a South Korean shipyard Tuesday, police said.

The 17,682-tonne ship, Hanjin Busan, caught fire in drydock in the southern port city of Pusan, a spokesman of Hanjin Shipping Ltd, the ship's owners, said.

"The container vessel caught fire in its engine room and was quickly engulfed in flames," he said.

The spokesman said 16 were confirmed killed and

three were missing but a police officer later said two more bodies were found in the vessel by rescuers.

The dead were all thought to be shipyard workers, the officer said.

Police said rescue workers cut holes in the hull to aid the search for survivors because even though the fire was brought under control within three hours, toxic smoke filled the ship, preventing them from entering the engine room.

"Four points were cut out at lower parts of the ship to release the gas. Rescuers are still looking for the missing," a police officer said nearly seven hours after the fire broke out.

He said he suspected sparks from welding machines caused the fire.

Television pictures showed dark and light smoke billowing from the superstructure of the ship while firefighters directed jets of foam.

The ship was being repaired by Hanjin Heavy Industries Co. Ltd. Both Hanjin Heavy and Hanjin Shipping are member companies of the Hanjin Group, one of South Korea's top-10 business conglomerates.

### Pyongyang calls Kim's birthday 'greatest holiday'

TOKYO (R) — North Korea Tuesday declared the birthday of leader Kim Jong-II "the greatest holiday of the nation" but offered no indication of whether Kim will make a rare public appearance on that day, Feb. 16.

It also gave no clue as to when Mr. Kim, who will be 55, will formally assume control of the Stalinist state.

"It is the unanimous desire of the Korean people to significantly celebrate the birthday of Comrade Kim Jong-II, the great leader of our party and our people," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

It said the Central People's Committee had issued a decree designation Feb. 16 and 17 as national holidays and ordered that "all the organs, enterprises, organisations and families shall hoist the national flags of the DPRK (North Korea) on these days."

The decree is the culmination of a 20-year process of elevating the importance of Mr. Kim's birthday that parallels his grooming as heir-apparent to his father Kim Il-Sung, founder and paramount leader of North Korea until his death last July.

Analysts of the secretive Communist state said Mr. Kim's birthday was made an "extraordinary day off work" in 1975, upgraded to a "regular day off work" in 1976 finally made a "public holiday" in 1982. This was extended to include Feb. 17 in 1986, they said.

The late Kim Il-Sung sought to make his son's birthday the "greatest holiday of the nation" in 1992, but the younger Kim declined out of his "absolute loyalty and noble moral sense of duty" to his father and his "unbound modesty," KCNA said.

KCNA's announcement of the decree, in a report monitored in Tokyo, was followed by official reports that Mr. Kim's birthday was celebrated in Russia, Mozambique, Madagascar and other states.

But the state-run media gave no indication that Mr. Kim will mark next week's birthday by making a public appearance. He has been seen in public only three times since his father's death.

Pyongyang has repeatedly asserted that Mr. Kim is in control of North Korean affairs, but he has yet to assume the posts of president and chief of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea held by his father.

### Burma troops continue shelling rebel camps

BANGKOK (AFP) — Burmese troops continued to shell Karen rebel bases along the border with Thailand, Burmese sources said Tuesday, while the rebels said the Rangoon junta had never seriously wanted peace.

The fighting between Rangoon troops and the rebel Karen National Union (KNU) also prompted Bangkok to repeat a warning that its forces would return fire if any shells lands on Thai soil.

One source in Chiang Mai told AFP by telephone that Burmese shelling of the Karen border stronghold of Kawmoora has been "continuous."

"There has been an increase in the shelling," he said. "It is still going on even now."

The source estimated that in recent days, as many as 1,000 shells had rained down

long as the ANC cooperates.

"I am committed to continue to do so as long as the ANC adheres to the spirit of consensus which underlies our transitional constitution. And I have recently been reassured on that score," he said.

"If President Mandela, because of his age or illness or other reasons, suddenly vacated the position, there will be a shudder through the international community and South Africa," Mr. De Klerk told a business lunch in Sydney.

"But I am convinced it will not be lasting, because the ANC (Mandela's African National Congress) has a good depth of leadership," he said.

The ANC could have difficulty maintaining unity without Mr. Mandela around, however, he added.

"President Mandela is a great figure within the ANC and it might be that his successor might not keep the divergent elements inside the ANC together."

Mr. De Klerk, in Australia for a five-day visit from Monday, said extremists from both the left and right had lost support in the new South Africa.

"I think as long as we cooperate we will be able to manage the lunatics," he said.

Mr. De Klerk was South Africa's last white president before Mr. Mandela defeated him in the country's first all-race elections last April.

Last month Mr. De Klerk threatened to withdraw his National Party from the government of national unity with the ANC over differences with Mr. Mandela on apartheid-era amnesty.

Mr. De Klerk said he is now committed to remaining within the government as

the Andes.

Peru contends the entire 1,000-mile (1,600 km) border was set by the 1942 treaty that confirmed its victory over Ecuador in a 1941 war. But Ecuador declared the agreement null in 1960.

Skirmishes erupted Jan. 26 in rugged jungle mountains called the Cordillera Del Condor, an area said to contain gold, uranium and other minerals, as well as possible oil reserves.

President Alberto Fujimori has vowed to enforce Peru's claims to the area, and said his forces would "remove all invaders" from Peruvian territory if diplomacy failed.

Ecuador said Monday that Peruvian warplanes had renewed attacks on Condor Mirador, an Ecuadorian military lookout 10 miles (16 km) inside the disputed bor-

der.

Mr. Fujimori said his forces were closing in on the last Ecuadorian outpost on Peruvian soil, and expected it would be taken soon.

But Mr. Duran-Ballen denied Monday that his troops were being defeated.

"We have not evacuated a single site," he said, adding that Ecuadorian forces had, in fact, repelled the Peruvian attacks.

Mr. Fujimori said 22 Peruvian soldiers have been killed or wounded in the fighting. One Peruvian citizen also was killed after stepping on a land mine. Ecuador said 10 of its soldiers have been killed and 24 wounded.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.

The Peruvian Air Force said a training plane with two crew on board was missing Monday during a routine flight. It did not say where the plane disappeared.



Chechen fighters are helped by local residents as they pull their horses out of thick mud on a road from Urs-Martan to

## Chechen refugees have nowhere left to run

SERNOVODSK, Russia (R) — When the Russian bombs started falling on Grozny, Zara and Zura took their children and fled into the fields. Several panicky moves later, at the outer edge of Chechnya, they have nowhere left to run.

Like the other 8,000 refugees packed into this decrepit Soviet-era mountain resort and the town of Sernovodsk down the hill, the Chechen sisters are scared the Russian helicopters circling overhead will attack them even here.

"God knows what will become of us then," Zara said, suddenly losing the stoical smile which had stayed on her small, bony face throughout a harrowing account of her family's six weeks on the road after escaping from their capital Grozny.

"There aren't even any cellars to hide in. The place is full to bursting with refugees. If the Russians start bombing us here, it will be a bloodbath," she added somberly. Just outside Sernovodsk, at the border with neighbouring Ingushetia, Russian Border Guards set up a checkpoint a week ago. All who left identity documents behind when they fled Grozny are turned back by troops in two armoured cars.

Most of the refugees here are women and children, crammed one family to a room, ragged laundry strung out between rickety beds. There is no heating or light, and not much food. Many of the children are sick from shock and stress.

Their men have either stayed on at home or fought or guard their houses, and they are dead.

Russian troops launched an onslaught on Grozny on Dec. 31, but in recent weeks have turned their attention to the villages.

Chechen fighters with only light weapons have managed to keep control of parts of Grozny with a hit-and-run campaign, melting away to the villages to rest before returning refreshed and ready for battle.

Russian forces have taken

revenge on villages they believe are sheltering fighters. Early last week they attacked Samashki, 10 kilometres east of Sernovodsk, as punishment for a Chechen attack on a Russian tank convoy.

"We have no fighters here," Khizar Vitayev, head of Sernovodsk Town Council, said hastily. Sernovodsk had a population of 12,000 people before the refugees started coming.

But the absence of fighters reassures nobody that their latest temporary will escape the fate of Samashki.

An anxious crowd gathered outside one ex-holiday camp building Monday to tell foreign journalists that helicopters had dropped leaflets with a printed appeal by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

It promised to rebuild the homes smashed by the Russian army if they would lay down their guns. It gave a warning, however, that Russia would bomb Sernovodsk if a single shot was fired in there.

The people of Sernovodsk, who have no guns, believe this is a sign the Russians are looking for an excuse to attack them.

"I was walking down the hill two days ago when I came across a neat pile of weapons, just sitting there. There were grenades and grenade launchers and guns," said the head cook, Rumi, a non-native woman in her 50s.

"I got two other women to help and we took them to the council building and handed them in. No one knew where they came from."

"Then, yesterday, one of the Russian helicopters landed nearby. We sent a couple of men over to see what the Russians were up to. They came back with another load of weapons, which the helicopter had left behind in another neat pile."

Rumi believes the Russians are providing Sernovodsk with a few guns to provoke some hothead from here into taking a pot-shot at one of them. "That would be all the excuse they need to move in and kill us all off."

## Sarajevo rebels in new freedom

SARAJEVO (R) — Hundreds of people in besieged Sarajevo flocked to use newly opened roads Tuesday, grabbing the chance to journey out without the risk of being shot.

Witnesses described the scene as orderly chaos as a line of cars stretched back more than one kilometre to await checks by U.N. peacekeepers.

Although the agreement by the Muslim-led government and Bosnian Serbs to open the roads eased the grip on the city, an exasperated United States said it was cutting off talks with the Serbs because of what it called their intransigence over an international plan to end the 34-month-old war.

The roads across the airport were opened to civilian traffic Monday for the first time in seven months in line with a ceasefire agreement that started on Jan. 1.

Bosnian Serb besiegers allowed aid agencies to cross last week.

About 300 cars queued to get out of the Dobrinja suburb Tuesday morning and others waited to come the other way.

Bosnian police checked lists to ensure prior approval had been gained. U.N. peacekeepers searched the cars, using mirrors to check underneath.

Then, a few at a time, cars were escorted across the frontlines by French U.N. armoured personnel carriers.

U.N. peacekeepers said more than 1,000 people from Sarajevo's three communities used the roads Monday to visit neighbouring suburbs which have been within sight but kept out of reach by the war.

Serbs travelled between their strongholds of Ilidza and Lukavica. Muslims and Croats drove across the U.N.-controlled airport to and from government-held Butmir and Dobrinja by bus and car. The suburbs ring the airport.

It was another step towards normality after more than 1,000 days of siege. The truce has halted fighting across most of Bosnia except for the northwest Bihać enclave, where Muslim rebels backed by Serbs from neighbouring Croatia are battling the government army.

In Washington, a senior official said the United States



French U.N. officers check together with Bosnian-Serb soldiers civilians cars leaving Sarajevo across the airport road linking the Bosnian capital with the rest of the country. The so-called "blue route" was closed since last July and reopened today for the first time (AFP photo)

was breaking off contacts with the Bosnian Serbs because of their refusal to accept a peace plan worked out by the "contact group" of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany.

"There's no point in shutting up the bill from Sarajevo to Pale to listen to the kind of crap which was dished out by (Serb leader Radovan) Karadžić," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke said.

The talks with the Bosnian Serbs were initiated last month after mediation by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter — a development the Serbs had believed played into their hands.

Mr. Holbrooke said however Mr. Karadžić would not be invited to a French-proposed peace conference unless he changed his mind and accepted the contact group plan.

The Serbs, who control more than 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, last sum-

"The meeting could cause no harm but the question is what will its agenda be. They cannot discuss anything on our behalf, especially not (Bosnian President Alija) Izetbegović," Mr. Karadžić told a Belgrade television station.

"The promise of confederation is hogwash. We want our sovereignty and, when we get it, then we will decide what we are going to do with it," he said.

Meanwhile a political chess game whose outcome could be wider war or new peace in old Yugoslavia is heating up as two implacable rivals prepare for talks and a rebel Serb minority debates its suddenly uncertain future.

Croatia broke a long stalemate in the game last month when it ordered 12,000 U.N. peacekeepers to leave this spring, exposing rebel Serbs whose breakaway state has taken root behind a U.N. ceasefire line since 1992.

Zagreb, countering suspicion that it is clearing the decks for war, announced last week that Foreign Minister Mate Granic will go to Belgrade soon for the first high-level talks between arch-enemies Croatia and Serbia in the Yugoslav capital.

Mr. Granic, expected to travel on Feb. 20, will seek a commitment by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević to diplomatic recognition of Croatia, which seceded from the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav Federation in 1991.

The Croatian Serb minority, which revolted over Zagreb's move to independence, would lose its claim to sovereignty if nationalist patron Milošević acknowledged Croatia within its U.N.-ratified borders.

An authoritative Serbian source said Mr. Milošević, Machiavellian master of ethnic politics in old Yugoslavia, now seemed ready to jettison at least part of the "Republic of Serb Krajina" (RSK), as "unnecessary baggage."

Croatia is similarly convinced that Mr. Milošević is so keen to be rid of economically ruinous U.N. sanctions imposed for fomenting Serb expansionist wars in Croatia and Bosnia that he will strike a deal with Zagreb soon.

## India's Congress Party expels Rao's rival

NEW DELHI (R) — India's ruling Congress Party Tuesday expelled former Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh, a leading rival of Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, the head of the party's Disciplinary Action Committee said.

"The committee has taken a decision to remove Arjun Singh from the primary membership of the party for about six years," K. Vijay Baskar Reddy told reporters after a committee meeting.

Mr. Singh was suspended from the party on Jan. 24 and later presented with a formal "charge-sheet" for alleged anti-party activities and speaking out against Mr. Rao.

On Monday Mr. Singh rejected the party's charges.

Mr. Reddy said one of the six disciplinary committee members, A. K. Antony, had wanted Mr. Singh's expulsion to be postponed for two weeks.

"But we felt, in view of the elections that are going on, we should maintain discipline in the party," Mr. Reddy said, referring to polls in six states beginning Thursday.

Earlier Tuesday the princess, this time wearing a light grey suit and swapping high heels for white slippers, visited an old people's day centre in Tokyo, where she listened to about 40 people, whose average age was 82, sing Scottish folk songs, including Japanese version of Annie Laurie.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

With 10 people including Britain's ambassador and defence attache, she sang "Oh God Help Us In Our Ages Past."

"My hands are cold," she told Wilfrid Hall, 84, a former British intelligence officer, who was wounded in Burma and now lives in Yokohama.

"She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"She was once like a flower, but now she is a real woman, who can understand other people's suffering because she has experienced great sorrow," the 64-year-old Ashida said.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

Jun Ashida, official designer for Japan's Empress Michiko since 1966, had no doubts that the princess had come out of her marriage breakup a stronger and more beautiful woman.

"I'll warn them for you," he replied, and the two held hands as they talked in the field of dry, brown grass.

Asked how long he held the princess's hands, Mr. Hall replied: "As long as I could."

Princess Diana stood for a while in front of a stone plaque commemorating Private Fredrick Ernest Goldsmith from Kentish town who was killed on Dec. 15, 1942.

There was only goodwill for the princess from the old people she met.

"It's a personal thing and I expect there are circumstances we don't know about involved," said 92-year-old Sumire Sano.

"It's a big honour to meet her. She is really beautiful."

## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation  
Established 1975

الجوردان تايمز جريدة سياسية عربية مستقلة ناطقة بالإنجليزية الصادرة عن مؤسسة الجوردان برس

Chairman of the Board of Directors:  
**MAHMOUD AL KAYED**

Director General:  
**MOHAMMAD AMAD**

Editor-in-Chief:  
**GEORGE S. HAWATMEH**

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,  
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.  
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the  
Jordan Times advertising department.

## Haste at certain cost

ON THE occasion of the convening of the 51st session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva last week, Rene Felber, the U.N. special rapporteur on the human rights situation in the occupied territories, came up with a controversial proposal, an end to his mandate. Felber, a former Swiss foreign minister, would start a search elsewhere, other than in the field of human rights investigations, for redressing the admittedly grave human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The basis of this proposal is, at best, troublesome since it relies solely on the peace process to improve the human rights condition in the occupied territories. More so in fact since U.S. ambassador to the commission Geraldine Ferraro immediately endorsed Felber's idea and its rationale.

We have no quarrel with the submission that in the final analysis the ultimate solution to the plight of the Palestinians lies in success on the peace front. We do have a difficulty, though, in understanding the call for ending the mandate of the special rapporteur at this stage, when there are still grave human rights violations prior to reaching of a working agreement between the two sides.

The Palestinians and the Israelis remain a long way from achieving peace and the continuation of human rights abuses can only hamper the attainment of the elusive peace. Thus it would seem to us that the best course to speed up the search for a panacea to the human problems in the occupied territories is to keep a close watch on the human rights situation there rather than end current periodic investigations.

There is another dimension also to the human rights case that Felber did not address at all. Besides the promises of the peace process on which he seems to pin too much hope, there is also the question of democracy in the occupied territories. Surely the special rapporteur knows only too well that the ultimate solution to all human rights violations lies in true and genuine democratisation. This aspect calls for a close and continuous watch with regard to not only the West Bank, which is still mostly under Israeli occupation, but also the Gaza Strip and Jericho area where there are signs that the human rights situation is anything but satisfactory. We therefore believe it is much too soon to end the internationally sanctioned investigations in the West Bank and Gaza and hope that the proposal to end the existing machinery for reporting human rights violations does not receive the support of the commission as a whole.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday said that Jordan's invitation of 35 Israeli parliament members to come to Amman and meet with His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan represented another step on the part of the Kingdom to normalise political relations with Israel. For Jordan, said Fahd Al Faneek, the peace treaty has opened the door for normalization of relations with the Jewish state despite the fact that Israel's actions and practices in the occupied Arab lands continue to come under criticism and condemnation. He said that for its part Jordan continues to back the Palestinian people's right to an independent state in Palestine regardless of Israel's views concerning this specific point. Noting that the Israeli deputies have complained that Jordanian parliament members were not present at the meeting with the King and that Jordanians did not welcome the visit, the writer said Israel is to blame for this situation because it has failed to respond favourably to the requirements of peace so far and persists in its hostile behaviour towards the Palestinians. As if to provide further hostility towards the Arabs and the U.N. resolutions, the head of the Israeli Knesset delegation was careful to mention in his address before the Crown Prince that Jerusalem will continue to be the united capital of the Jewish state. Israel's adamant position can never serve the cause of peace with the Arab states, Faneek continued.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday expressed the view that the new draft traffic law in Jordan was unbalanced and unfair because it tends to lay all the blame for road accidents on motorists and sparing no blame for conditions on the road. It has been the habit and practice of the traffic department to blame the drivers for all the road accidents which continue to rise in number despite the penalties, said Husni Ayesh. The writer said that the draft law on traffic failed to mention that the pits and the pools of water in the roads could be the cause of at least part of the accidents and the traffic department lay the blame on the authorities that are responsible for the condition of the roads.

## Washington Watch

### Ron Brown: A unique secretary of commerce

BY ANY measure, Ron Brown has been a unique U.S. Secretary of Commerce. Over the past 50 years, the individuals who have filled that presidential cabinet post at the Department of Commerce have played rather insignificant roles in the administrations in which they served. But that has not been the case with Ron Brown.

Ron Brown has transformed the traditionally ceremonial nature of the position. In an administration which views trade promotion as an integral component of its overall foreign policy, Mr. Brown's role has been substantial.

And while Secretary Brown has recently faced partisan Republican attacks from some members of the new Congress, he has received high praise from the normally Republican business community. One such business leader recently said: "I'm a Republican, but I can honestly say, we in the U.S. business community have never had a friend in Washington like Ron Brown. He understands that the key to U.S. economic security is export promotion in competitive foreign markets. We've needed support. The Japanese and Europeans get that help from their governments. Now we have friend in Washington who supports our efforts."

Only in office for two years, Mr. Brown has established a high international profile as a globe-trotting secretary of commerce. Bringing delegations of U.S. businessmen with him, he has promoted successful commercial ventures in China, India, South America and the Middle East.

Now in the Middle East for his third visit to the region as secretary of commerce, Mr. Brown brings with him a complex agenda of commercial and foreign policy concerns.

#### Support for the peace process

Mr. Brown will meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, officials of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Palestinian businessmen in an effort to support the economic development he knows is critical to the success of the peace process. He will convene two business roundtables, in Ramallah and Gaza, at which he will hear the concerns of the Palestinian business community, especially regarding the impediments that have made economic development difficult. But he will also brief them on the services the U.S. will make available to support the growth of small-and medium-sized business in the occupied territories.

While in Gaza, the secretary will also announce the opening of the first joint U.S.-Palestinian business venture. In so doing he will spotlight the first successful project supported by the U.S.-based Builders for Peace.

In Israel, Mr. Brown will announce the first projects under the aegis of the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission. He will also meet with Israeli government and business leaders.

During his stop in Taba, Secretary Brown will participate in the first ever meeting of U.S., Palestinian, Egyptian, Jordanian and Israeli economic ministers to discuss regional economic cooperation and development.

In Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Brown will meet with heads of state, ministerial counterparts and the business leadership to sign contracts for major development projects and to support further U.S.-Gulf business ventures.

All in all, the trip's agenda is both complex and far-reaching. In making his third sojourn to the Middle East, Secretary Brown is demonstrating his familiarity with the region and its leadership. The secretary also intends the trip to be a visible demonstration of the U.S. commitment to regional peace and long-term mutually beneficial trade relations.

Prior to his departure, Secretary Brown held a briefing for Arab-American business and community leaders at the Department of Commerce. At that meeting he outlined the programme of his six-country regional tour and listened to the concerns and suggestions of the assembled Arab-Americans.

It must be remembered that Mr. Brown is no stranger to the Arab-American community — another respect in which he is unique.

At the 1988 Democratic National Convention, Mr. Brown served as committee chair of the Jesse Jackson for presidential campaign. In that capacity he provided important access to Arab-Americans, whom he understood had long been denied a role in the Democratic Party. And in the intervening years Ron Brown never abandoned that commitment to inclusiveness.

I will never forget that upon assuming the role of Chairman of the Democratic Party in 1989, Mr. Brown invited me to his office for the first official meeting he held as party chair. It was a signal that the exclusion of Arab-Americans from U.S. politics was to be a thing of the past.

While he was party chair, Mr. Brown addressed Arab-American Institute conferences and, despite pressure from those who continued to feel threatened by Arab-American empowerment, he even travelled to meet Arab-American groups in different communities around the U.S. Mr. Brown was also helpful in securing Arab-American roles in the party, on its committees and in the 1992 Clinton presidential campaign.

As commerce secretary, Ron Brown has held numerous meetings with Arab-Americans — a first for any secretary of commerce — and has invited Arab-Americans to accompany him on each of his Middle East trips.

When Bill Clinton won the November 1992 elections, the press immediately began to speculate on who the president-elect would appoint to fill his cabinet. There was one name high on everyone's list: Ron Brown.

As chairman of the party, Mr. Brown was given major credit for the Democratic victory that year. When Democrats had lost hope that a Democrat could return to the White House, it seemed that only Ron Brown continued to believe that the party could win. And during the intensely-fought Democratic presidential primary of 1992, when the

candidates attacked each other with more ferocity than they used on their Republican opponent, it seemed that only Ron Brown held the party faithful together.

He was a prodigious vote-getter and fund-raiser. And he brought a uniquely professional staff to work for the party during his tenure as chair.

There were those who felt that an African-American could not succeed in uniting the Democratic Party — Mr. Brown proved them wrong. When President Clinton rewarded Mr. Brown's service with the secretary of commerce post, there were again some voices who wondered whether a liberal Democrat and an African-American could perform well in that role — and again Mr. Brown has proven his sceptics wrong and shown his qualification for high office. And as I have noted, he has turned sceptics in the U.S. business community into his strongest supporters.

Mr. Brown oversees an agency of 36,000 employees working over 100 different departments, with a budget of \$3.6 billion. The range of activity under the Department of Commerce is so broad that it is, at times, baffling, including such diverse organisations as the Foreign Commercial Service, the U.S. Weather Service, the Bureau of Labour Statistics, and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (which provides daily translations of radio and television broadcasts), and newspaper articles from every major nation of the world.

While most past secretaries of commerce have seen their role as ceremonial or as simply administrative, Mr. Brown has defined a new role for himself. In the post cold-war era, in an economically interdependent world where foreign policy at times equals trade policy, Mr. Brown has successfully sought to elevate the role of secretary of commerce into a foreign emissary for U.S. bilateral economic ties with the new major emerging markets (Russia, China, South Africa, the Middle East and India). His efforts have already led to over \$20 billion in new U.S. contracts in those markets; but he has also won goodwill for the U.S. and its international relations everywhere he has travelled.

Mr. Brown is currently under attack from some partisan Republicans in Congress for what they allege are ethical improprieties in some of his dealings before assuming his cabinet post. While the business deals he conducted prior to his confirmation as secretary of commerce have already been reviewed and approved by the various government ethics committees, the attacks continue.

Some feel that these attacks have more to do with denying Mr. Brown any future advancement than they do with any real past indiscretions. President Clinton has reportedly considered asking Mr. Brown to head his 1996 re-election campaign, and some have suggested that, should Secretary of State Warren Christopher resign, Mr. Brown would be an ideal secretary of state (in fact, back in 1991 some newspapers speculated he might be appointed secretary of state).



## Why the Council of Europe should put conglomerate Russia on hold

By Peter Smithers

**VICO MOCOTE,** Switzerland — Since the Council of Europe's creation in 1949, the feature that has set it apart from other intergovernmental organisations has been its insistence on respect for human rights and a democratic form of government as conditions for membership.

To such an extent was this the case that two member governments, Greece and Turkey, were obliged to withdraw from all or some of the activities of the council because their political systems and practices were for a time judged not to conform with these requirements.

The council is now confronted with Russia's desire to join.

Conglomerate states comprising diverse ethnic groups have proved to be no longer viable in modern conditions. The Belgian, British, Dutch, French and Portuguese colonial empires were such conglomerates. Smaller conglomerates such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have proved unworkable. A powerful historical current is now flowing against the few remaining conglomerate states.

Everywhere in the world people are demanding the right to live under their own governments in circumstances of their own choosing. This is in accord with the principles that originally inspired the Council of Europe and that most certainly still should.

The Russian empire of the czars, which was assumed and enlarged by the Soviet Union, was a colonial empire. It differed from others in two respects only: The subject ethnic

groups were contiguous and not separated by sea from the parent state, and the unity of the conglomerate was maintained by a brutal and ruthless use of force.

Today Russia stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and is still a conglomerate comprising many ethnic and national groups. Some of these peoples were originally subjugated by the czars. Both under the czars and under the Soviet Union, the Chechens were treated with barbarous cruelty. Under modern conditions, and in view of what is now happening in Chechnya, can the Russian conglomerate state be held together in its present form without the use of an unacceptable degree of force?

The current events in Chechnya make clear beyond doubt that some ethnic and cultural groups wish to enjoy the right to live under governments of their own choosing. A long history of brutal persecution has failed to extinguish this legitimate desire and has, on the contrary, made Chechens grimly determined to separate themselves from Russia.

The events in Chechnya will never be forgotten or forgiven by those who have suffered the death of friends and relatives and the destruction of homes and neighbourhoods at the hands of Moscow's troops. Inevitably this will strengthen their determination and that of the inhabitants of other regions.

The reckless destruction of civilian life and property in Chechnya far exceeds anything even remotely approaching the conditions that in Greece and Turkey were judged incompatible with full membership in the

Council of Europe. If the organisation is to retain any element of credibility as a defender of democracy and human rights, the following considerations should be conveyed to Russia:

1. No state that treats its subjects with the indiscriminate brutality used in Chechnya could be eligible to join the Council of Europe as a member state. The gross abuse of human rights and dignity are offensive to everything for which the council stands.

2. On the other hand, the council should make clear that it would welcome the participation of the Russian government in its intergovernmental work. This would be temporary measure until the situation in Russia is clarified and stabilised. Such participation can take place without full membership.

3. The attempt to do so would result in disintegration in chaotic conditions. This would be extremely dangerous and costly in terms of human suffering. If such an attempt were to succeed, the world would be confronted with a giant military dictatorship. It was not for such a result that men fought and died in World War II.

But there is a policy that is in conformity with the principles of the Council of Europe and is also expedient: to encourage and assist Russia in the devolution of power to those ethnic regions that wish for this, including independence.

At the same time, every encouragement should be given to each ethnic region to establish and maintain close relations with Moscow. This would be of great benefit to both parties and is the only course of action that offers a hope of creating a stable situation.

Furthermore, there is no question of interference in the internal affairs of Russia.

The Russian government must conduct its business as it thinks best. But the Council of Europe has an inescapable obligation to maintain the well-established conditions for membership and to make them clear to states applying for membership.

I am aware that several governments are of an opinion that in this instance

principle should be sacrificed to expediency. This is what happened at Munich many years ago. The argument is flawed even on grounds of expediency, for the Russian conglomerate state cannot be held together permanently by force. Such political systems are obsolete and unworkable.

The attempt to do so would result in disintegration in chaotic conditions.

This would be extremely dangerous and costly in terms of human suffering. If such an attempt were to succeed, the world would be confronted with a giant military dictatorship. It was not for such a result that men fought and died in World War II.

But there is a policy that is in conformity with the principles of the Council of Europe and is also expedient: to encourage and assist Russia in the devolution of power to those ethnic regions that wish for this, including independence.

One of the largest sources of wealth in the world today "Arab" oil, is being drawn out at a tremendous rate, with falling revenues and without much benefit to the indigenous population.

The religious/cultural factor. This is probably the most difficult to fathom, but it can, at least in part, be explained as a backlash to the other factors.

Probably, it is through considering a combination of the above factors, that one can call a certain group of people (Bait Lid) "terrorists," "Freedom fighters," "martyrs" or otherwise. It is also well to remember that it is not unusual for the press (Reuters, etc.) to pass judgement through designation.

A final word about the writings of Mr. Khouri in the Jordan Times. Many of his views are at variance with mine, but I must concede that through his power of intellect he has lifted, almost single-handed, Jordanian journalism to a higher status.

Dr. Omar Mange, Amman.

### Coming to grips with reality

To the Editor:

THE POLEMIC between Messrs. Khouri and Hourani seems to me to represent the schism between the West — in general — and the Arabs when it comes to the Palestine problem. While Mr. Khouri tries to delve into the causes of things, Mr. Hourani judges the effects on their own merits and does not like what he sees. But who does? Are we happy with what the long years of endurance and frustrations have done to us? How have they affected our feelings and psyche? Those who understand power politics overcome — or more correctly — work at overcoming — these undesirable effects and their frustrations, by resorting to pragmatism. They fully realise that their ordeal will not be understood, and have to find, and abide by, the formulae to coexist in the world of today.

"Exercise in casuistry" is better than no exercise at all. I appreciate the attempt by Mr. Khouri to come to grips with the "full underlying factors." It is a healthy direction for

Lamia Nasser, Amman.

## In the grip of 'Possession'

How do ideas take shape in an artist's mind? Why are some thoughts nurtured and others cast aside? Here,

**A S Byatt** looks back on the long gestation of her Booker Prize-winning novel, Possession

THE BEGINNING OF Possession, and the first choice was, most unusually for me, the title. I thought of it in the British Library, watching that great Coleridge scholar Kathleen Coburn circumambulating the catalogue. I thought: "She has given all her life to his thoughts," and then I thought: "She has mediated his thoughts to me." And then I thought: "Does he possess her, or does she possess him?" There could be a novel called Possession about the relations between living and dead minds." This must have been in the late sixties. It was the time of the *nouveau roman*, of the novel as "text."

When I first recognise a thought as the germ of a story, I form a shape, or file, in a corner of my mind, to which I add things that seem to belong to it — quotations, observations. At that stage this Gestalt is more like the plan for a painting than a novel. It has colour and texture, though I have to think hard to call these to mind. The *un Gestalt* of Possession was a grey cloudy web to do with the ghostliness and connectedness of the original idea. I think it was also to do with the *nouveau roman*, which I still visualise in that form. I imagined my text as a web of scholarly quotations and parodies through which the poems and writings of the dead should loom at the reader, to be surmised and guessed at.

The next decisive choices came in the 1980s when I was teaching Browning and George Eliot, and also lecturing on Henry James and his father, Henry James senior, a leading Swinburnian. I had had the idea that the word possession involved both the daemonic and the economic. Reading the Browning letters made me see that "possession" had a primary sexual connotation, too. I made a decision: there should be two couples, man and woman, one alive and one dead. The novel would concern the relations between these two pairs.

My grey cobwebby palimpsest changed colour.

It took on a lurid black, shot with crimson and scarlet, colours of passion. I was teaching that great novel, *The Bostonians*, with its world of witches, wizards, mediums, and spirit-rappers and roaring radicals" to a generation of students involved in the politics of gender, who disliked James's tragicomic treatment of lesbian passion. It occurred to me that in the world of 19th-century spiritualism and feminism, possession had both its meanings at once.

So there was a need for the 19th-century woman to be a lesbian, or to be thought to be a lesbian, and the 20th-century woman scholar to be a feminist. What George Eliot's letters added to this texture of texts was the sense I always have that her real passion-self is splendidly absent from the letters kept by the people who kept them.

Her love-letters, unlike those of the Brownsings, were buried with her. It is the lack of an unusually devoted marriage between poets once separated that we have the Browning letters. There have been several proposals to dig up George Eliot. There is a gothic plot, I thought, of violence and skulduggery. The Gestalt got more lurid, purple, black, vermilion, with flying white forms.

I half-knew that the form of my novel should be a parody of every possible form, popular and "high culture", when I was asked to review Umberto Eco's *Reflections on the Name of the Rose*, which combines medieval theology, church history, gleefully bloodthirsty horrors, reflections on the form of the novel, with a hero who is an avatar or precursor of Sherlock Holmes. What entranced me about Eco's *Reflections* was his pleasure ("I wanted to murder a monk") and his technical reflections on the fact that detective stories and melodramas had to be written backwards. If you want to burn down a library quickly and irretrievably, you must make it burnable when you invent its architecture.

I had been thinking a lot about the pleasure principle in art. Art does not exist for politics or for instruction — it exists primarily for pleasure, or it is nothing. It can do the other things if it gives pleasure, as Coleridge knew. And the pleasure of fiction is narrative discovery, as it was easy to say about television serials and detective stories, but not, in those days, about serious novels.

So my novel should be a parody, not of Sherlock Holmes, but of the Margery Allingham detective stories I grew up on. It should learn from my childhood obsession, Georgette Heyer, to be a romance, and it could learn simultaneously from Hawthorne, Henry James's predecessor, that a historical romance is not realist, and desires to "connect a bygone time with the very present that is fitting away from us."

I added things: It should be an epistolary novel, which meant writing letters the scholars should find; it should contain early narrative forms (Victorian women writers wrote fairytales) and late ones (bits of biographies and critical "accounts" of what was going on). The Gestalt in my mind changed colour and form and became delicious, green and gold, the colours of Tennyson illustrations in my mind as a child, of dream landscapes, of childhood imaginings of a world brighter, more jewel-like than this one.

There was a huge problem. I knew modern forms were parodic — not only Eco but the critic of Malcolm Bradbury had been pointing that out — parodic not in a sneering or mocking way, but as "rewriting" or "representing" the past. The structural necessity of my new form was that the poems of my two poets, the most important thing about them in my own view, should be in this no-longer ghostly text. And I am not a poet, and novelists who write poems usually come to grief. Robertson Davies, the Caedmon novelist, had written a

novel with a parodic libretto made up of the poems of Thomas Lovell Beddoes. I said to the poet DJ Enright I was contemplating using the early poems of Pound that look as though they could be by Browning. "Nonsense," he said. "Write your own."

So I tried. My mind has been full since childhood of the rhythms of Tennyson and Browning, Rossetti and Keats. I read and reread Emily Dickinson, whose harsher and more sceptical voice I found more exciting than Christina Rossetti's meekness. I wanted a fierce female voice. And I found I was possessed — it was actually quite frightening. The 19th-century poems that were not 19th-century poems wrote themselves. They fitted into the metaphorical structure of my novel, but were not mine, as my prose is mine.

There is one further late choice I should like to mention. There are three passages in the 19th-century narrative which are recounted by a Victorian "omniscient" third-person narrator. These three include the epilogue, and tell what might be thought of as the most important, beautiful and terrible moments in the lives of the Victorian characters.

I still receive angry letters from time to time from all over the world, saying these passages are a mistake that I have cleverly told the story of the past through documents, diaries, letters and poems, and that I am breaking my own convention incompetently. But my decision was very deliberate.

It was partly polemical, for two reasons. I do believe that biographies are a kind of shadow-play, and that what really mattered is likely to elude the piecemeal together of lives. Doris Lessing endorses this view, mischievously, at the start of her autobiography. I also believe the third-person narrator has been much maligned in the recent past as it does not pretend to "God" — simply the narrative voice, which knows what it does know.



A STUDY IN GREEN AND GOLD AND BLUE: The Beguiling of Merlin (1870) by Sir Edward Burne-Jones

And I wanted to show that such a voice can bring the reader nearer the passions and the thoughts of characters, without any obligation to admire the cleverness of the novelist. There is a nice irony about this — the writer and reader share what critics and scholars can't discover.

And the Gestalt now? A green and gold and blue balloon, far away, untouched

able. A writer can't think about novels that have gone away. The Gestalt of the one I am writing, about the 1960s, is a jagged harlequin pattern of coloured fragments and smoking bonfires. And there is something weak about the narrative line, or tension, connecting these, that I'm trying to deal with.

The Independent

## Majority of Jordanians favour unity

(Continued from page 1)

could prevent the integration of both segments of society.

It said that 68.7 per cent of the national sample, 56.4 per cent of the opinion leaders sample and 65.9 per cent of the camp sample believe that a "great degree of integration" has been reached in society.

The poll said that a study of the polarisation factors as far as East Bankers are concerned are:

— The concentration of private sector ownership in the hands of West Bankers;

— East Bankers' fears about the growing number of Jordanians of Palestinian origin;

— The dual loyalty of Jordanians of Palestinian origin (to Jordan and Palestine).

— And the lack of appreciation among Jordanians of Palestinian origins of the gains they made in the Kingdom.

As for polarisation factors for West Bankers, the poll listed the following:

— The concentration of public sector appointments in East Bankers;

— The disproportionate representation of West Bankers in government and Parliament;

— Keeping sensitive positions in the hands of East Bankers;

— And the government's favouritism of East Bankers in the various fields.

The poll, which was carried out by 60 students and analysed by a group of political scientists and sociologists and other professionals at the University of Jordan, noted that opinion leaders were more willing to acknowledge these polarisation factors; 43.6 per cent to 58.8 per cent of them recognised these fac-

tors compared to 29.9 per cent to 44.5 per cent in the national sample and 20.8 to 57.7 per cent in the camp sample.

For example, 66 per cent of East Bank opinion leaders said that an obstacle to national unity is the "dual loyalty among Jordanians of Palestinian origin," while 40.9 per cent of West Bankers agreed with them.

In the national sample, 35.4 per cent of Jordanians of East Bank origin acknowledged this factor compared to 24.7 per cent among West Bankers and 22.2 per cent among refugee camp residents.

"Concerning the West Bankers' belief that the concentration of sensitive government jobs among East Bankers is a polarisation factor, 74.1 per cent of West Bankers in the opinion leader sample agreed with this analysis compared to 43.9 per cent among East Bankers in the same sample; 33.3 per cent of East Bankers in the national sample and 35.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

The poll shows that the percentage of those who did not want improved ties was higher among East Bankers than in both samples, though it the percentage was low, reaching only 31.4 per cent in the national sample and 12.6 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

Among West Bankers, 19.5 per cent in the national sample did not want improved relations nor did 8.9 per cent among opinion leaders.

The poll said that the majority of the people surveyed believe the PLO should "show good will, coordinate with the government and pursue unity" with Jordan in order to improve its ties with the Kingdom.

The majority of the people surveyed said the Kingdom should "show good will (towards the PLO), seek coordination with the PLO and support it" in order to have better PLO-Jordan ties.

The poll shows that the majority of the persons said that it is the PLO and not Jordan which should take

those measures to improve the relations between the two sides.

The poll said there is a dominant belief that the agreements the PLO has reached with Israel will have more positive than negative effects on Jordan. But it said the opinion leaders "were more convinced of the negative effects than those in the national sample."

The negative effect, said the poll, will be on the economic field and on Jordan's negotiating position with Israel, while the positive impact will be in enabling the Kingdom to proceed with these negotiations as a result of the environment "of security and stability which will prevail."

The poll reported limited optimism that the Palestinian-Israeli talks will result in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

The percentage of those who believed the negotiations will lead to the creation of an independent state ranged between 16.1 per cent in the camp sample to 19 per cent in the national sample and 16.2 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

This view was expressed by 18.1 per cent of East Bankers and 20 per cent of West Bankers in the national category, compared to 17 per cent among East Bankers and 15.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

Dr. Hamarneh said the poll provides a "wealth of information that could lay the ground for an objective and systematic analysis of the relations among East and West Bankers in the Kingdom."

The purpose of the poll, said an introductory note to it, was to assess how East and West Bankers in Jordan see their relationship and to de-

scribe the "suspicions, fears and obstacles" that could prevent the integration of the two segments of society.

Informed sources said the centre, which is the first academic institution to study the political situation in the Kingdom and provide data

## Brown: U.S. is committed

(Continued from page 12)

Palestinian delegate to the talks Nabil Shaath told Reuters. He said the Palestinians would also seek direct trade access with Jordan and Egypt to reduce dependence on Israel.

The two-day meeting, in the Red Sea resort of Taba and headed by Mr. Brown, aims to boost trade between Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel.

The Commerce Department in Washington said the aim of Mr. Brown's current Middle East tour was to promote trade and investment.

The percentage of those who believed the negotiations will lead to the creation of an independent state ranged between 16.1 per cent in the camp sample to 19 per cent in the national sample and 16.2 per cent in the opinion leader sample.

This view was expressed by 18.1 per cent of East Bankers and 20 per cent of West Bankers in the national category, compared to 17 per cent among East Bankers and 15.4 per cent among West Bankers in the opinion leader sample.

Dr. Shaath said U.S. and Israeli officials for an end to the Arab economic boycott of Israel "must be corrected to ask for the end of Israeli boycott and closure of the Palestinian territory."

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

Dr. Shaath said U.S. and Israeli officials for an end to the Arab economic boycott of Israel "must be corrected to ask for the end of Israeli boycott and closure of the Palestinian territory."

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

Dr. Shaath said U.S. and Israeli officials for an end to the Arab economic boycott of Israel "must be corrected to ask for the end of Israeli boycott and closure of the Palestinian territory."

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development and call for joint investments and cooperation, particularly in setting up industrial zones not only with Israel but also with Egypt and Jordan.

He said the Palestinians would present plans for development



**Business  
Daily  
Beat**

A review  
of economic news  
from the Arabic press

## Violators of labour law pay JD1m in fines

★★ The inspection directorate at the Ministry of Labour has fined 20,338 institutions JD 1,058,928 for labour violations last year. The directorate supervises 86,211 institutions employing 276,512 Jordanians and 106,503 non-Jordanians. The directorate received 2,541 labour complaints last year and managed to solve 2,097 cases amicably (Al Dustour).

★★ The Ministry of Health is expected to float tenders for contracts estimated to cost JD5.5 million this year. The tenders will be to expand or set up various hospitals throughout the Kingdom (Al Ra'i).

★★ The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has started implementing the first of two projects to provide 41,000 telephone lines to Zarqa governorate by 1997 at a cost of JD 25.5 million. The first project, costing JD 17 million, will provide 20,000 telephone lines to northern Zarqa (Zarqa Al Jadidah) Awajan, Al Azraq, Al Suknah, Al Hallabat, Al Massara and Al Omari. The second project, which has not started yet, will provide 21,000 telephone lines at a cost of JD 8.5 million to residents of Russeifeh and Musherfeh. There are 31,384 telephone lines in Zarqa, of which 1,458 are open for subscription (Al Ra'i).

★★ A new public shareholding company, Al Iqbal Company for Printing and Packing, is offering two million shares (worth JD2 million) for public subscription. The company, which was registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade on Dec. 27, 1994, has a total capital of JD8 million and aims at setting up and operating a commercial printing press and packing plant. Key founders of the company who paid JD6 million of the capital are: The Bank of Jordan (JD 400,000); Tawfiq Fakhoury, chairman of the bank, (JD 400,000); Al Saeed Company for Trade and Development (JD 400,000) and the International Cigarettes and Tobacco Company (JD 200,000); Dr. Ashraf Al Kurdi (JD 150,000) and Mr. Samir Theeb Anis Isa (JD 150,000) (Al Ra'i).

★★ According to an agreement signed recently with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the U.S. company Ecology Environment will be carrying out a feasibility study for developing the Jordan Valley. The U.S. company was chosen from among five international firms at the recommendation of the Ministry of Planning after it won the highest points (Al Dustour).

★★ A committee from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Planning, the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation, the Amman Chamber of Industry and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce is studying the possibility of establishing a permanent international fair in Amman similar to those in Syria and Egypt. A decision has not yet been taken on whether to expand the current grounds of the Amman International Fair or to set up a new one. The preliminary cost of a new one is estimated at JD 5.1M. At present the Amman International fair has only 5,100 square metres whereas the land around it is 466,100 square metres in area (Al Dustour).

★★ Obtaining a telephone line in the Abdali area of Amman will not be a problem within the coming three months as more than 12,000 new telephone lines will be available to the exchange (Al Dustour).

## U.S. seeks to boost exports to Arab Gulf states

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AFP) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown will visit the Gulf Wednesday to discuss reviving flagging U.S. exports to the lucrative market and seek more business opportunities.

After visiting Israel and Jordan, Mr. Brown will arrive Wednesday in Kuwait, where U.S. companies are seeking opportunities in the

fields of telecommunications, housing and electricity, a U.S. official in the emirate said.

The commerce secretary, who is to visit Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Thursday, is accompanied by the heads of 10 key U.S. firms which are either already doing business in the region or eyeing new contracts.

They include Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS), which won a deal in December to build a shipyard in the UAE.

"NNS is currently marketing a state-of-the-art frigate to several countries in the Middle East and is among the final competitors to build up to six frigates for the UAE, a project that could be worth more than \$1 billion," a U.S. embassy statement said.

Another firm is Oshkosh Truck Corporation, which has made considerable investments in marketing in the UAE, Kuwait and Egypt.

Oshkosh estimated sales potential in the UAE at around \$300 million and said it would seek large sales of heavy duty tactical trucks in the UAE and Kuwait during Mr. Brown's visit, according to the U.S. embassy in Abu Dhabi.

Oshkosh also hopes to look into substantial opportunities for commercial airport rescue and fire fighting vehicles.

U.S. construction and defence trucks," the embassy said.

Mr. Brown's delegation includes Bruce Coles, president of Stone and Webster Inc. which is seeking construction opportunities in the region.

U.S. embassy officials said the company was bidding for projects in the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar. They said the projects, involving gas and refinery expansions, would be awarded this year.

A company statement said the mission would provide an opportunity to talk with policy and decision makers "to demonstrate Stone and Webster's interest and commitment to the countries and clients being visited."

The statement gave no details of the projects but the UAE invited bids for doubling the output capacity of its key oil refinery at Ruwais from around 130,000 barrels per day. It also plans to set up a domestic gas-network in the Gulf nation is gradually

switching from oil to gas, a cleaner source of energy.

Qatar has also embarked on one of the biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the world to tap its giant North gas field.

The U.S. company Mobil is involved in one of the project that will eventually produce more than 10 million tonnes per year.

Another company, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, one of the biggest firms in the world, has also set its eyes on the region's energy industry.

The U.S. embassy quoted the company as saying it hoped during this visit to encourage foreign governments to offer opportunities for oil and gas exploration and enhanced oil recovery projects.

Embassy officials said Mr. Brown would also talk on bolstering commercial links when he arrives for his first visit to the UAE Thursday.

## Raw material prices find a fragile floor after fund exodus

LONDON (R) — Bargain hunting restored a fragile stability to shocked world commodity markets Tuesday after a sell-off by speculators and investment funds.

But expert opinion was divided on whether the past 15 months' inflationary "bull run" in raw materials might resume.

Tokai Bank Europe, however, argues that it would need a sustained economic slowdown to stop commodities going up by perhaps 25 per cent more this year.

"One trigger for the sell-off that had earlier fuelled the commodity boom sent prices tumbling Monday on everything from copper through sugar to crude oil."

One view is that supply and demand are still in a tight enough balance to support a gradual return to stronger prices, particularly in the key base-metals sector.

Selling there was taken the flagship copper, down by almost 10 per cent from a 5½-year high hit in mid-January.

"Yesterday was black Monday for base-metal prices," said brokerage Macquarie Equities.

But it adds that consumer buying of the kind that helped prices Tuesday is likely to stabilise markets "after the current surge of fund selling dissipates."

A contrary view is that supply/demand fundamentals will not alone buoy up commodities if the fund managers just decide — as some did this week — that revived bond and equity markets are now a better place to put their money.

"It will be a difficult thing to repair the damage," said Cliff Green of Trend Analysis.

Economists say that higher interest rates now in place in

the United States and elsewhere may already be braking the economic rebound that has fired up raw-material demand.

One trigger for the sell-off seems to have been U.S. data on Friday showing a rise in unemployment, seen as an indicator that the economy may be slowing and that bonds are set to rally.

Tokai Bank Europe,

however, argues that it would need a sustained economic slowdown to stop commodities going up by perhaps 25 per cent more this year.

"Only a sustained slow-

down in OECD industrial production growth to below three per cent (year on year) would be sufficient, on a historical basis, to prevent further rises in commodity prices," its latest international economic bulletin says.

London Metal Exchange

copper traded Tuesday just above \$2,825 per tonne, that was up from a 1995 low of \$2,780 on Monday but still far below the mid-January high at \$3,081.

Aluminium was assisted

Tuesday by news of another big draw of 13,925 tonnes on London warehouse stocks. It traded a \$10 or so above Monday's close of \$2,050.

Gold was steady just above \$375 per ounce. Benchmark Brent blend of North Sea crude oil stood easier by some 25 cents from the start of the week to be discussed around \$17.10 per barrel.

Coffee, cocoa and sugar

were steady in early London trading after sharp New York-led falls Monday.

## Kuwait banks said to regain dinar/foreign exchange role

KUWAIT (R) — Three

Kuwaiti banks and a branch of a Bahrain-based bank have won permission to trade the Kuwaiti dinar on foreign exchanges for their own account for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war, banking sources said Monday.

They said National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Gulf Bank, Burgan Bank and the local branch of Bahrain-based Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait (BBK) received central bank

authorisation in late 1994.

The sources added that NBK and Gulf, the emirate's two biggest commercial banks, have also received central bank permission to trade interest rate derivatives for their own account for the first time since the Gulf crisis.

The reforms are part of a central bank plan to strengthen the profitability and competitiveness of a banking system slowly recovering from war losses and long-standing debt problems.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET BOUSING BANK CENTER JORDAN - SIDIKZEH		TELEPHONE: 661010 / 661170		ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 07/02/1995		COPPER'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED	PREV. DAY PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ABAR BANK	100	18480	184.600	184.500						
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2700	11205	4.210	4.150						
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	3123	12487	4.100	4.000						
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	100	11000	4.000	3.900						
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2551	6817	2.760	2.650						
THE HOUSING BANK	3300	19635	5.950	5.950						
JORDAN GULF BANK	457	1348	2.970	2.950						
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	8900	12300	1.420	1.370						
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL BANK	4000	13705	3.700	3.700						
BEST EGYPT SAVING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1250	3575	3.100	3.100						
ABAR BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9950	12736	1.300	1.280						
ABAR BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	550	2283	4.150	4.150						
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	6000	6392	1.440	1.390						
<b>BANKS SECTOR</b>	<b>47656</b>	<b>136904</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 157.00</b>	<b>CHANGE: -0.382</b>						
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	500	1145	2.350	2.290						
<b>INSURANCE SECTOR</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>1145</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 128.52</b>	<b>CHANGE: -0.282</b>						
JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	3861	5675	1.480	1.470						
JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER / OLD	14975	20541	1.380	1.370						
ABAR INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	2512	11630	4.750	4.650						
ABAR INVESTMENT & SECURITIES	4530	9726	2.100	2.110						
DIRECTED MIDDLE EAST HOTELS	2520	5594	2.110	2.070						
ABAR INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	2700	9712	3.600	3.600						
<b>SERVICES SECTOR</b>	<b>31248</b>	<b>63268</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 128.00</b>	<b>CHANGE: -0.612</b>						
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	19900	58703	2.950	2.950						
THE ABAR PETRO/NEW	505	505	5.050	5.050						
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	35	329	9.400	9.400						
THE JORDAN WOOLST MILL	750	5588	7.950	7.450						
ABAR PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	8679	35073	4.200	4.060						
ABAR PRINTING & PACKING	100	500	5.030	5.000						
ABAR PLASTIC INDUSTRIES	4859	11899	2.000	1.950						
HAWA INDUSTRIES	550	3775	2.730	2.730						
DAR AL DANIA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	4670	36268	7.650	7.660						
ABAR INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	1350	1250	.950	.920						
ABAR ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	600	4058	6.770	6.750						
LINEAR POLYTHENE	1075	1117	2.500	2.500						
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1250	2963	2.500	2.500						
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	1100	4620	2.400	2.400						
ABAR CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	2625	6693	2.600	2.550						
DETERGENT MODERN INDUSTRIES	525	2082	4.000	3.990						
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	4400	8372	1.950	1.900						
<b>INDUSTRIAL SECTOR</b>	<b>66034</b>	<b>191536</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 122.36</b>	<b>CHANGE: -0.462</b>						
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>145438</b>	<b>394854</b>	<b>INDEX NUMBER: 140.62</b>	<b>CHANGE: -0.452</b>						
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	:	153358								
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	:	156857								



Spanish tennis star Arantxa Sanchez Vicario during her tennis training session on Monday (AFP photo)

## Sanchez-Vicario becomes No. 1

**S.T. PETERSBURG** (Agencies) — Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain replaced Germany's Steffi Graf on Monday as the top ranked women's tennis player in the world.

Sanchez assumed the number one ranking for the first time in her career when the ailing Graf lost points for failing to defend her title to Tokyo last week. Sanchez has 307,9131 points and Graf has 289,1963.

Graf, who has not played this year due to a calf injury, also lost all her points for failing to defend her title at the Australian Open the previous week.

Sanchez reached the finals of the Australian Open where she was defeated by Mary Pierce.

The calf injury is the latest in a series of setbacks for Graf.

Graf suffered a back injury during the Canadian Open in August. She managed to make the finals of the U.S. Open but lost to Sanchez-Vicario in three sets when her back injury flared up again.

Graf tried to return for the season-ending Virginia Slims champions in New York but lost to Pierce in her second match.

That loss capped Graf's least productive season in recent years. The Australian Open was her only Grand Slam victory of the year. She lost to Pierce at the French Open, was upset in the opening round at Wimbledon by Lori McNeil and was beaten by Sanchez in the finals at the U.S.

### Open. Graf to make Paris comeback

Steffi Graf will have a special point to prove when she returns from injury to competition for the first time this year as top seed at next week's \$430,000 women's indoor Paris Open.

Detroned as world number one by Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in this week's rankings, Graf will be eager to reassert her authority after missing the season's opening events because of a nagging back injury.

And she will be seeded to meet her arch-rival, Mary Pierce, in the final. Pierce will be making her first appearance in front of home fans since her triumph at the Australian

Leading women's rankings	
1. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario (Spain)	
2. Steffi Graf (Germany)	
3. Mary Pierce (France)	
4. Conchita Martinez (Spain)	
5. Jana Novotna (Czech Republic)	
6. Lindsay Davenport (U.S.)	
7. Gabriela Sabatini (Argentina)	
8. Natasha Zvereva (Belarus)	
9. Kimiko Date (Japan)	
10. Anke Huber (Germany)	
11. Magdalena Maleeva (Bulgaria)	
12. Iva Majoli (Croatia)	
13. Brenda Schultz (Netherlands)	
14. Naoko Sawamura (Japan)	
15. Amy Frazier (U.S.)	
16. Sabine Hack (Germany)	
17. Lori McNeil (U.S.)	
18. Julie Haidar (France)	
19. Mary Joe Fernandez (U.S.)	
20. Amanda Coetzer (South Africa).	

## Lone Atlantic swimmer nears land

**PARIS (AFP)** — Guy Delage the 32-year-old Frenchman trying to swim alone across the Atlantic, has nearly reached the West Indian island of Barbados after 53 days in the water.

He is expected to sight land on Wednesday and to reach the shore either on Thursday or Friday after swimming or drifting aboard his raft for almost 3,900 kilometres.

Since setting out on December 16 from Cape Verde off West Africa, Delage has swum for an average of seven hours a day. The rest of the time, he has spent aboard his hi-tech raft where he can sleep, cook and communicate via the telephone and a fax machine.

It took Delage several days to get his body acclimated to life in the ocean and half way across he said he had lost eight to 10 kilograms in weight despite having stocked up with extra fat before setting out.

## Milan want fans on best behaviour for Arsenal match

**MILAN (Agencies)** — AC Milan are demanding exemplary behaviour from their followers when they host England's Arsenal in the European Super Cup second leg Wednesday.

The match is the first staged in Italy since a young Genoa supporter was stabbed to death before a game against European champions Milan on January 29. Simone Barbaglia, an 18-year-old Milan fan, has been charged with murder.

The Italian Olympic Committee suspended all sport last Sunday to show its determination to conquer hooliganism. It is now up in Milan, a club whose image has increasingly been tarnished by violence, to set the right example at the San Siro.

Milan spokesman Ugo Alevi said that about 2,000 English fans were expected to make the journey from North London for a tie which stands at 0-0 after a dull first leg.

"There won't be any special security measures for them. They will all be housed in a special sector of the stadium, segregated from the Milan fans," he said. "What we're most concerned about

is how our fans behave."

English soccer, dogged by violence for many years,

reached a low point in 1985 when 39 fans, most of them Italians, were killed at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels as Liverpool fans rioted before the European Cup final with Juventus.

But English crowd control has since won the respect of many Italians and the press warmly praised the atmosphere during the first leg at Highbury last Wednesday.

Arsenal came to Italy to play Torino on their way to lifting the European Cup Winners' Cup last season and there were no reports of trouble. Their victory over Italy's Parma in the final in Copenhagen was equally free of fan violence.

Milan seek to claim the Super Cup — the annual meeting between the European champions and Cup Winners' Cup holders — for the third time after taking the 1989 and 1990 editions.

They start as favourites after the 1-0 draw in London but will seek to avoid a repetition of last year when they lost 2-1 to Parma at the San Siro after winning the

## Nagano determined to host Winter Olympics

**NAGANO (AFP)** — Nagano, where the Winter Olympics will be held in exactly three years, has sought to reassure international sports leaders that the Kobe earthquake, or other tremors, will not affect the games.

The city leaders are trying to remain as calm as possible while the rest of the country is in a state of near panic over the devastation in Kobe and who will pay the bill to rebuild the city.

"Everything is going well as planned," Nagano Mayor Tasaku Tsukada told AFP. "As Nagano is far from the damaged areas, there is no problem about holding the Olympic Games here."

Two days after the killer quake, Tsukada courteously turned down one offer from

Salt Lake City in the United States to take over the 1998 Games.

But German sports leaders have also made a request for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make sure Nagano is not at risk from any new quake. The IOC itself is concerned that rebuilding Kobe may divert funds from the Winter Games showcase, according to international sporting officials.

Nagano, the second Japanese city to host the Winter Olympics, is expected to welcome 1.5 million visitors and 3,000 athletes and officials from around 70 countries for 16 days starting February 7, 1998.

"The sheer numbers involved is what worries us,"

said one international Olympic official.

But Tsukada, outwardly, shrugs off the fuss. "As you see, out there, the construction of facilities and transport is going smoothly," he said.

The central Japanese city is 350 kilometres northeast of Kobe, where more than 5,200 people were killed and more than 110,000 buildings destroyed or damaged.

No matter what was reported in the world press, Nagano was not affected by the quake.

About 30 per cent of the new facilities and bullet-train lines to be built for the Games are ready. The 150 billion yen (\$1.5 billion) worth of construction should be ready by the end of 1997.

However, there are some

question marks about Nagano's readiness. According to city officials, no food is kept in reserve for emergencies.

There are only 200 blankets kept for 354,000 residents in case of a disaster.

And, like Kobe, the local government has no emergency plans to bring in troops in such event.

Nagano is also one of many Japanese cities to have been seriously hit by quakes. In 1847, an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter Scale killed 8,600 people.

In the past 50 years, there have been two large quakes measuring higher than 5.0 on the Richter Scale.

Acknowledging worries abroad following the Kobe disaster, Nagano now plans to review emergency mea-

sures. "We already planned to review our disaster programmes so people would not be worried," Tsukada said. "But because there was so much damage in Kobe, we want to make a greater effort in the review so we can withstand such earthquakes."

City officials said it planned to complete the review by the end of 1995, but no details were available yet.

"There is no doubt that another quake like the one in Kobe will hit somewhere in Japan," said Yoshibumi Okada, chief researcher of the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention.

About 10 per cent of earthquakes in the world occur in Japan or its vicinity.

## Blazers rout Rockets in fight-marred game



Indiana Pacers Dale Davis (right) and San Antonio Spurs Dennis Rodman (10) reach for a rebound during first half action in Indianapolis. The Pacers, who are 2 games out of the Central Division lead, won 98 to 93 (AFP photo)

play well," said Olajuwon.

The Blazers led by 26 points by halftime and Houston was unable to draw within 20 thereafter. Portland led by as many as 40 points late in the game.

"If they played like that every night, they'd have the best record in the NBA," Olajuwon said. "All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards banded to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you.'"

George said many witnesses offered to help him out as he was led from the arena by a security guard.

"All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards banded to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you.'"

George said many witnesses offered to help him out as he was led from the arena by a security guard.

"All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards banded to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you.'"

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The fighting obscured Portland's performance on the court.

"The guys off the bench played well, the starters played well, we got good minutes from everybody," Robinson said.

Chris Morris added 19 points for the Nets, who are without leading scorers Coleman and Kenny Anderson until after the all-star break.

Coleman has a chip fracture of his left hip and Anderson has a sore right forearm.

"I knew I would have to play a different role tonight, but it's nice being in that position," said Gilliam.

"I enjoy when guys look to me to do some scoring. I like that situation."

"They're a better team when their two stars are out,"

observed Detroit head coach Don Chaney. "They want to prove that they can win with

out them."

Joe Dumars scored 27 points by halftime and Houston was unable to draw within 20 thereafter. Portland led by as many as 40 points late in the game.

"If they played like that every night, they'd have the best record in the NBA," Olajuwon said. "All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards banded to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you.'"

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The fighting obscured Portland's performance on the court.

"The guys off the bench played well, the starters played well, we got good minutes from everybody," Robinson said.

Chris Morris added 19 points for the Nets, who are without leading scorers Coleman and Kenny Anderson until after the all-star break.

Coleman has a chip fracture of his left hip and Anderson has a sore right forearm.

"I knew I would have to play a different role tonight, but it's nice being in that position," said Gilliam.

"I enjoy when guys look to me to do some scoring. I like that situation."

"They're a better team when their two stars are out,"

observed Detroit head coach Don Chaney. "They want to prove that they can win with

out them."

Joe Dumars scored 27 points by halftime and Houston was unable to draw within 20 thereafter. Portland led by as many as 40 points late in the game.

"If they played like that every night, they'd have the best record in the NBA," Olajuwon said. "All I know is when I walked out of there I probably had six business cards banded to me from people saying 'I saw him hit you.'"

The Blazers, who were involved in a bench-clearing incident with Sacramento last month, were more restrained. Under NBA rules, they had five players suspended for one game for leaving the bench in the earlier melee.

"I guess we learn from our mistakes," said Blazer coach P.J. Carlesimo. "I still don't think it was wise to go into the crowd, and we'll pay the price."

The fighting obscured Portland's performance on the court.

"The guys off the bench played well, the starters played well, we got good minutes from everybody," Robinson said.

Chris Morris added 19 points for the Nets, who are without leading scorers Coleman and Kenny Anderson until after the all-star break.

Coleman has a chip fracture of his left hip and Anderson has a sore right forearm.

"I knew I would have to play a different role tonight, but it's nice being in that position," said Gilliam.

"I enjoy when guys look to me to do some scoring. I like that situation."

"They're a better team when their two stars are out,"

observed Detroit head coach Don Chaney. "They want to prove that they can win with

## RESULTS

Atlanta 107, Philadelphia 92  
New Jersey 101, Detroit 97  
Portland 120, Houston 82



## Brown: U.S. committed to help Palestinian trade, investment

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Declaring that "Gaza is open for business," U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown on Tuesday brought U.S. investors to the autonomous area to meet with their Palestinian counterparts.

"We are bringing together a public-private partnership," Mr. Brown said at the opening of a U.S. government business seminar at a community centre in Gaza City.

Mr. Brown also met with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat at the Palestinian leader's headquarters.

In the meeting, Mr. Arafat committed himself to combating Palestinian militants opposed to making peace with Israel, Mr. Brown said.

The secretary said Mr. Arafat's pledge could help ease the closure that Israel clamped on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in response to the Jan. 22 double bombing in central Israel in which 21 people were killed. The bombers were members of the Islamic Jihad group from Gaza.

Mr. Brown said U.S.-Palestinian economic relations have a way to go. "The chairman (said) a moment ago he was starting from zero. We're starting from zero as well. This is the beginning of a process," Mr. Brown told the news conference.

Mr. Arafat said he was

pleased by the U.S. assurances on trade.

"This visit is a clear signal from His Excellency President Clinton and Mr. Brown of the support of the American administration to the Palestinians," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown announced the launching of two projects established or being planned by U.S. companies from a group of Arab-American and Jewish-American business leaders eager to invest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat told the Americans that the Palestinians badly needed help to build their infrastructure.

"We are sure this coordination and cooperation can do a lot for our people, for the peace process and for our children," Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Brown has called for private investment in the Palestinian self-rule areas to the past. However, U.S. officials travelling with the secretary said that since autonomy began last May, only one private U.S.-Palestinian venture was formed, a factory making building materials in the Gaza Strip.

The U.S. government offers private investors loan guarantees and political risk insurance as incentives, the officials said.

Ziad Karam, a member of Mr. Brown's delegation, announced

plans to build a hotel in Gaza.

Mr. Brown said economic stability was a condition for the success of the peace process. "We also know that the peace process brings high expectations among the people... and we want to do everything we can to help in that change."

Addressing the seminar, he said: "We are here today on serious business. We want to declare publicly, with you, that Gaza is open for business."

There has been no visible improvement in Gaza's economy since Mr. Arafat took control in July, with unemployment hovering around 50 per cent. The situation deteriorated further after Israel sealed the Strip, keeping tens of thousands of Palestinians from their jobs in Israel.

Mr. Brown's stopover to Gaza is part of a weeklong Middle East tour promoting U.S. trade and investment in the region.

Palestinians, seeking greater access to world markets, will push for a preferential trade pact with Washington at a meeting in Taba, Egypt, on Tuesday of trade ministers from the United States, Israel and Arab peace partners.

"Palestinian products have not been admitted to the United States before under a Palestinian label," chief

(Continued on page 7)



HIGHER COMMITTEE MEETS: His Royal Committee for peace negotiations (see page one) Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Tuesday (Petra photo) chairs a meeting of the Higher Steering Com-

## Peres sees no need for daily check of popularity

Algerian film director attacked

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Monday his government's peace policy did not need to be "applauded every morning" by Israeli public opinion.

"To my taste, a test of a government is when it can continue its policy without being applauded every morning, because the policy is the right one," he said.

Mr. Peres, now on a visit to the United States, was speaking to reporters at the United Nations after briefing all 15 Security Council members, other diplomats and senior U.N. officials on the Middle East peace process. He said the group included representatives of seyeho Arab delegations.

Asked whether Israel's Labour-led government was losing domestic support, in view of a recent spate of fatal attacks against Israelis by Palestinians opposed to the peace process, he added: "We got a mandate for four years. We don't have to test our popularity every morning."

"On the contrary, we have to show that even through corridors of lack of popularity, we are maintaining the mandate that we have gotten."

Popularity polls were "like perfume, nice to smell but dangerous to swallow," he added.

## For a third time, key suspect switches sides

NEW YORK (AP) — In Siddig Ibrahim Siddig Ali, prosecutors in the biggest extremism trial in U.S. history gained a smooth-talking, college-educated and handsome witness, a fresh weapon against their chief target — a blind Egyptian sheikh.

But Mr. Siddig Ali comes with considerable baggage, including hundreds of pages of transcripts from taped conversations to which he appears to be the ringleader of plots to destroy U.S. landmarks and kill political figures.

He also had agreed to cooperate last summer, only to change his mind and flip back to the defense.

The guilty plea Monday comes just as prosecutors are trying to build momentum against Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the 56-year-old cleric who allegedly guided what prosecutors have dubbed a war of "urban terrorism."

Now, the prosecution has two turncoats and an informant to testify against the sheikh and 10 others accused of conspiring to attack U.S. landmarks and leaders to pressure the United States to change its policies to the Middle East, particularly towards Egypt and Israel.

Mr. Juppe was speaking after a meeting on Algeria with Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua and Defence Minister Francois Leotard following President Francois Mitterrand's call last Friday for European Union ministers to convene a conference on the Islamic insurrection in Algeria.

Mr. Pasqua for his part said the premier's office would issue a clarification later on Tuesday, but Mr. Juppe implied this would not be necessary.

"The clarification was already made yesterday by Mr. Pasqua and myself. The operation is to make them lose millions. And that happened," he answered, according to transcripts. "This is the message: We want to tell them, you're not far from us and we can get you anytime."

When the defendants were arrested in the trade centre case Mr. Siddig Ali suggested to Mr. Salem that they kill some Federal Bureau of In-

"The sentiment in Israel is for peace, but there is a strong feeling that fighting terror must be a joint venture of all the parties who are seeking peace."

He confirmed that during his briefing, the question of Israeli settlements in occupied territories had been raised.

He said he replied that Israel had a three-point policy of its own: Not to add new settlements, or to confiscate land for new settlements or to enlarge existing ones and not to invest public money in building houses or apartments in the settlements.

There is "no need for more commitment" from Israel on the settlements, he told reporters.

"It's a unilateral Israeli decision. We are not going to say to the Israeli public that we changed our policy because of Palestinian or anybody else's pressure. We act out of conviction, not out of pressure," he said.

An Israeli diplomat said Israel was dead set against public debate in the U.N. Security Council on the settlements, such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation asked for last month, saying it could make the "atmosphere worse."

Asked if Israel had shifted its refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Mr. Peres said it had not.

## COLUMN 8

### Suicide rate soaring in Estonia

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (AP) — The suicide rate in Estonia has doubled in five years to reach the highest level in Europe, an Estonian doctor told a medical conference Monday. Arno Adamsoo of Tartu University blamed the increase on growing alcoholism and intense pressure to succeed in the new market economy following the Baltic republic's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. From 1988 to 1993, the suicide rate jumped from 40 to 80 cases per 100,000 people, and the other two Baltic republics, Latvia and Lithuania, have witnessed similar increases, Mr. Adamsoo said. In the 1980s, he said, the Estonian government waged a programme against alcoholism and Estonians "were hopeful because liberation from the Soviet system seemed near." But now, both alcoholism and social pressures are on the rise. Mr. Adamsoo said Estonia's market economy has meant "a faster work pace for entrepreneurs and businessmen, people who don't think about their health."

### Japan approves gene therapy for first time

TOKYO (AP) — The Japanese government has given its approval for the first time to controversial gene therapy, as part of treatment for a four-year-old boy suffering from immune deficiency. But Health Minister Shioichi Ide urged doctors Tuesday to adopt a cautious approach, taking ethical considerations into account. Mr. Ide told a news conference that it was hoped the treatment would lead to "a major breakthrough." His ministry gave its approval for the gene therapy Monday. It will involve extracting lymphocytes from the boy, mixing them with normal adenose deaminase (ADA) genes, before re-injecting them in the hope that a normal immune system will develop. The boy was born lacking ADA. Even a common cold could prove fatal to him. Mr. Ide said he recognized the need to promote advanced medical technology but hoped doctors would exercise extreme caution. Hokkaido University Hospital is expected to begin the therapy on the boy next month.

### Sikhs to donate gold to beautify shrine

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Indian Sikhs living in Britain will donate 500 kilograms (1,100 pounds) of gold to beautify their faith's holiest shrine — the Golden Temple in the Punjab city of Amritsar, news reports said Tuesday. The temple was the centre of a Sikh separatist campaign for a homeland and the scene of a fierce battle between Indian troops and entrenched Sikh militants in 1984. Later that year, two Sikh bodyguards assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for ordering troops into the shrine. Sikhs living in Britain felt the urge to replace the worn out gold plating that does the temple top, the Indian Express newspaper reported. It will cost an estimated 50 million rupees (\$1.6 million) to buy the gold and put it on the dome. The gold plating of the temple was first done by Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 18th century. Since then the gold has not been replaced.

### World's tallest building proposed for Melbourne

MELBOURNE (R) — A proposal by an Australian company to build the world's tallest office building in Melbourne — a city with 24 per cent office vacancy — won support from the Victoria state government Monday. Victoria's deputy premier, Pat McNamara, said the proposal by the Grollo Construction Group to build the 500-metre (1,640 ft) building reflected a "new spirit of enthusiasm" in the state, which was hit badly by Australia's recent economic recession. The construction group's chief executive, Bruno Grollo, said Sunday he wanted to build a three-sided gold tower, representing the sun and the moon and the planets and stars.

## Iran wants unconditional talks on island dispute

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran said Tuesday it was prepared for unconditional talks with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to settle a dispute over three Gulf islands but declined to relinquish its territorial claims.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as criticising the stance taken by eight Arab countries in Cairo with regard to the islands.

The Iranian official said the stance was "one-sided" because it did not reflect Iranian "goodwill" in the dispute.

The foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council called on Iran Monday to relinquish its occupation of the islands, which are claimed by the UAE.

The ministers said in a statement that they supported UAE sovereignty over the islands and urged Iran to accept the emirates' proposal to refer the dispute to the World Court.

Syrian endorsement of the statement came as a surprise. It is one of Iran's main Arab allies.

Iran has rejected World Court arbitration over the islands, insisting on direct talks.

"On the basis of goodwill and good neighbourliness Iran welcomes the continuation of bilateral talks in order

## EU deal looks closer for Turkey, good for Cyprus

ANKARA (R) — Customs union with Europe, a goal that has eluded Turkey for decades, seems within its grasp and developments may help end a dispute with Greece over the division of Cyprus, analysts said on Tuesday.

European Union (EU) foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels on Monday, agreed in principle on customs union with Ankara. The deal must still be approved by the Joint Association Council, to meet on March 6.

As an apparent counter-weight for the removal of a standing Greek veto to Turkey's rapprochement with the EU, the ministers also agreed to begin membership negotiations with Cyprus after 1996.

"Sufficient time has been given before launching talks with Cyprus. This leaves Turkey's options open. It is not as if the EU will start talks with Cyprus tomorrow," said Seyfi Tashan, chairman of the independent Foreign Policy Institute.

"Greece may still put up obstacles before March but the customs union looks set to happen," he told Reuters.

Turkey, an associate member since 1963, agreed with the European Community in 1973 on a 22-year transition period to enter customs union. Its 1987 bid for full membership however, has been shelved by tacit mutual agreement.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Lebanon wants Italy to take back waste

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's parliament wants Italy to take back thousands of barrels of toxic waste dumped in the middle eastern country during its 1975-90 civil war, the head of a parliamentary committee said. Hageg Jokhdarian, head of the parliamentary environment committee, told reporters after a late-night session on Monday that Italy should pay the cost of taking back the waste sent to Lebanon in 1987-88. He said the committee was asking the government to ask Italy to take back the waste at its own expense. The government ordered a high-level inquiry last week after Greenpeace, the international watchdog, said the 10,000 barrels of waste were "ecological time bombs" and offered to help get Italy to take them back. Mr. Jokhdarian said a secret Lebanese army investigation in 1988 concluded that 1,500 barrels were buried in Lebanon and the rest were dumped in the sea or destroyed.

### Israel opens police station in Gaza

NEVE DEKALIM, The Gaza Strip (AFP) — Police Minister Moshe Shahal opened the first border police station in a Jewish settlement on the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, in a bid to improve security. The Neve Dekalim station, manned by 78 officers, will serve the bloc of colonies in the south of the Strip where most of the 5,000 Gaza settlers live. "This station is part of our new operation in the Gaza Strip," said police spokesman Eric Bar Chen, following the launch of an autonomous zone in the territory last May. He said 370 policemen maintain order in the Israeli-held areas of Gaza. Mr. Shahal underlined his support for total separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

### Haq says militants could be crucified

CAIRO (R) — One of Islam's leading religious scholars has said Egypt's Muslim militants qualify for the severest Islamic penalty including crucifixion and amputation. Gad Al Haq Ali Gad Al Haq, the sheikh of Al Azhar, said in the Nile Valley town of Beni Suef that militants did not deserve to be called "religious extremists," let alone "Islamic groups" — the title the militants use themselves. "They are just criminals because Islam does not recognise murder, violence or upsetting stability," he added. He was quoted in the government newspaper Al Gomhouria on Tuesday. The sheikh said the militants, whose hallmark is killing policemen, qualified for what Islamic law calls "hadd al baraha," the penalty reserved for those "who fight God and his prophet and spread corruption on earth." Citing the Koranic verse on the subject, he said: "They should be killed, or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off... or be expelled from the earth. That is their punishment in this world and they will have a great torture in the next."

### Mobile telephones banned from Knesset

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli members of parliament have been banned from using mobile telephones during full session after complaints from Speaker Shlomo Meisels about disruption from the constant ringing. "It is unfortunate that the representatives of the people take personal calls during debates and whisper into their phones like stage prompters," Mr. Weiss told the Knesset affairs committee which voted out portables on Monday. Deputies will still be able to stay in touch during committee meetings, although they were asked to keep calls to a minimum.

### Russian envoy, Sharash holds talks

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharash discussed the Middle East peace process with a senior Russian envoy here Tuesday. The official news agency SANA said Mr. Sharash's talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posavayuk also covered bilateral relations. Syria is the first leg of a Middle East tour by Mr. Posavayuk which will also take in Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the occupied territories. Diplomats said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev would embark on a Middle East tour in March.

### Kuwait MPs say Israel bombing heroic act

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaitis approve of a Palestinian suicide bombing that killed 21 Israelis and oppose their government's condemnation of the attack, members of parliament (MPs) said on Tuesday. "That was a heroic act against an aggressive occupier," MP Adnan Abdul Samad said in an interview. MP and former Trade and Industry Minister Abdulla Al Hajeri suggested Kuwait's condemnation of the Jan. 22 attack was the result of U.S. diplomatic pressure. "The statement issued by the government I regard as a black spot in the history of Kuwait," Mr. Hajeri told Reuters, echoing a common view among MPs gathered for parliament's weekly session. "That statement stirred popular resentment."

"One way or other, a solution to the Cyprus problem is drawing closer," he said.

Ankara and Mr. Denktaş declined to comment on the EU but said it should only happen after the two rival communities are united in a federal state — a goal that has eluded all efforts by the United Nations and others for two decades.